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# THE VAGABOND.





# THE VAGABOND:

BY ADAM BADEAU.

“I stand condemned,  
A wandering vagabond.”  
*Richard II.*



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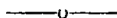
# CONTENTS.



	PAGE
Preface,.....	5
Introductory,.....	7
Gottschalk and Thalberg,.....	15
Thorwaldsen,.....	22
The Matinéés,.....	28
Meyerbeer,.....	35
Matilda Heron,.....	42
E. H. Chapin,.....	49
Niblo's,.....	56
French Art in New York,.....	64
Edwin Forrest,.....	71
La Grange,.....	78
"The World's Own,".....	85
The Amateurs,.....	93
Verdi,.....	100
Myself,.....	106
Henry W. Bellows,.....	112
American Art,.....	120
American Playwrights,.....	128
Parties,.....	135
The Ballet,.....	143
The National Academy of Design,.....	151

	PAGE
Charlotte Brontë,.....	158
My Unknown Correspondents,.....	166
The Country,.....	174
The Watering-Places,.....	180
Behind the Scenes,.....	187
Lake George,.....	194
The Howadji,.....	200
Charlotte Cushman,.....	207
Edward Everett,.....	213
American Sculpture,.....	221
Washington Society,.....	228
Pre-Raphaelitism,.....	235
Mrs. Kemble,.....	242
American Belles,.....	249
Carl Formes,.....	256
Rachel,.....	263
An Amateur Opera,.....	272
Henry Ward Beecher,.....	279
Edwin Booth,.....	286
The Beaux,.....	293
George Bancroft,.....	301
The Prima Donnas,.....	308
Rossini,.....	315
The Married Belles,.....	321
Boston,.....	327
The Preachers,.....	333
Piccolomini,.....	340
A Night with the Booths,.....	347
Society and Art,.....	355
Longfellow,.....	362

## INTRODUCTORY.



"The origin and commencement."—*Hamlet*.

I AM a Vagabond: I care not who knows it, nor who is frightened from perusing my papers because of the announcement. You who dwell in dull propriety for ever, may be shocked; you who take names for things, may shut up the book; you may remember that Johnson defined a Vagabond as "a term of reproach," and that he stigmatized vagabundus as "low Latin," the lexicographer! but you must at least admit that I who have so exact an appreciation of my own character, am likely to be correct in my notions about other people.

Vagabond has a merry sound in my ears; the word is at any rate classical French, and *vagare* was good enough Latin for Virgil; while as regards English, Shakespeare used it; and though Richard III. does speak of "vagabonds, rascals, and run-aways," all in one breath, surely the Crookback is poor authority in such matters; and though La Feu does say to Parolles, in "All's Well that Ends Well," "You are a vagabond, and no true

traveller," La Feu was himself a scamp unworthy of belief. I maintain that the vagabonds are an illustrious fraternity. *Æneas*, *pious Æneas*, madam, was one of the first, wandering around the Lybian shores; and Homer; (you have heard of the poet? Yes?) did he not write the *Odyssey*, which is nothing but a history of the adventures of a vagabond? Ulysses had a good time, too, with Calypso and Circe, and he escaped both Scylla and Charybdis, did he. Then the knights-errant of chivalry, what were they but vagabonds? Their very name indicates their vagrant habits. 'Tis true that Webster's dictionary is worse than Johnson's; it does say "by the laws of England and the United States, vagabonds are liable to be taken up and imprisoned;" but Webster couldn't spell, and one of his name was hanged; so how can he be right? Blackstone, a person who wrote commentaries on law, a century ago, approaches nearer to justice in his comments on my tribe: "Idle persons or vagabonds, whom our ancient statutes describe to be such as wake at night (correct), and sleep on the day (after a ball), and haunt customable taverns and alehouses, and routs about; (well, who don't go to routs that gets invited), and no man wot from whence they came, nor whither they went." And why should any man have wot? let any man restrain his curiosity. Two other old authors are all I shall quote to show how versed I am in antiquarian lore.

Holinshed says: "The vagabond that will abide nowhere, but runneth up and down from place to place," and Du Cange ex-

claims: "Vagabundus que non habet domicilium, sed hodie hic et cras alibi." The women at least are silenced by my Latin sentence; that is to them unanswerable; if they try me any further, I vow I'll give them Greek; so ladies beware!

But do you want to know of some more vagabonds? There are Benedick and Jaques, both good fellows; and Gil Blas of Santillane, the companion of lackeys and their lords, the secretary of archbishops, the comrade of banditti, and the favored swain of half a score of black-eyed Castilian damsels; Cortez and Pizarro too, were nothing but vagabonds on a grander scale. The Spaniards with all their stately ceremony seem inclined this way, for think of the noble Don Caesar de Bazan, that Wallack has played so superbly; ragged and courteous, full of feeling and frolic, ripe for any mischief, and ready for any generous deed; the very prince of vagabonds. Then there's Captain Johu Smith in our own history, whose name will remind every one that the sex is not averse to these good-for-nothing, fortunate scamps. Has not dear, dusky, little Pocahontas rendered herself for ever famous by flinging her copper-colored arms round a vagabond's head? And would not I be willing that fairer maids should follow the example to-day? And don't some frolicking, rollicking, saucy blade, without a tittle of your worth, Mr. Spectator, or a pretension to your learning, Mr. Rambler, with none of the qualities that should bear the palm, but only a vagabond, don't he often distance all his rivals in modern drawing-rooms?

I am a vagabond around town. I go prying into all sorts of places, and frequent every corner of Manhattan. I purpose one day to give you a sketch of some scene—say in a pawnbroker's shop, and at another time will discuss the marvellous beauty of an opera singer's legs. I am an *habitué* of the Academy of Music, but often kill time by dropping in at the shows of marvellous beasts and five-legged donkeys on Chatham street. I visit all places of worship, from black prayer-meetings to the yearly gatherings of the Friends, go to hear Antoinette Brown and Dr. Hawks; I will sometimes tell you what I have seen behind the curtain, and sometimes discuss the merits of a favorite actor on the stage. Pictures and parties, beaux and bores, all I study; art and life, in all their phases I like to contemplate. I have peered among the purlieus of Justice, and burrowed in Knickerbocker corners for relics of our Dutch and Huguenot ancestry. I am likely to find out whatever there is of queer, quaint, or passing strange in this metropolis. But, with all my eagerness to catch the bubble of the minute ere it burst, to crowd as much experience into an hour as any man, I have my sober times, and can find sermons in stones, sometimes more forcible than those I hear in churches; so my lucubrations may not always be in a merry vein. I know not that I am merrier than other men. I am young (else I would not be a vagabond), and life seems pleasant enough to me; if you look at it with my eyes, it will be like gazing through Claude Lorraine glasses—every thing will be in bright colors. Still, on a dull day, you may get

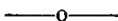


a soberer paper, and on a sunny one, you shall have quips and cranks and wanton wiles.

I forgot to tell you that in all my wanderings, whithersoever I may penetrate, whether into mysteries like those of Bona Dea, from which the entire masculine gender was excluded, or within the sanctum sanctorum of temples, over whose doors might be inscribed, as of old, "Procul, O procul, este profani!" though I may tell you of things that some of you would otherwise dream not of, though I discuss fashionable belles and reverend priests, as well as Bowery actresses or apple-venders, I hope never to transgress the limits which good breeding imposes. I shall disclose no secrets that ought to be kept, and give no inquisitive gossip food for scandal. So now you know me. I have introduced myself, taken my text, cleared my throat, and blown my nose; otherwise, Mr. —— of Niblo's, has called "Francois!" and running out from behind the scenes, the débutant bows his best bow, smiles his opening smirk, and is ready to begin.



## P R E F A C E .

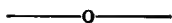


THE following papers were written for a weekly periodical published in New York. This fact will account for allusions that might not otherwise seem always pertinent; if it should also account for the slight degree of interest the articles may happen to excite when the pertinency is passed, the explanation will be in some measure consolatory to

THE AUTHOR.



# THE VAGABOND.



## GOTTSCHALK AND THALBERG

"Under which King, Bezonian?"

2 Henry IV.

GOTTSCHALK, the adored of the ladies, is about to leave us; he has given three concerts, each positively the last, and another is announced. Gottschalk's career as an American artist, both at home and abroad, relieves us from the reproach of neither producing nor appreciating genius; for despite his numerous affectations, and his *ad captandum* artifices, the handsome piano-player is a genius. I heard him play, a week ago, at the concert of the Philharmonic Society, and never was more impressed with his littleness and his greatness. He lounged listlessly towards the platform, scarcely vouchsafed a bow of recognition as he snuffed up the incense of applause proffered by his worshippers in pink bonnets, and sat down at the instrument. At first, his hands wandered languidly over the keys, and his eyes, soft and dreamy, but with a *blasé* expression strangely mingling with

their gentleness, were gazing, not vacantly, but still not intently, around the house. Occasionally the petted Adonis smiled as he caught the glance of an acquaintance, and then the radiance which his worshippers say is sun-like, Apollo-like, came over his countenance. In fact, he is irresistible; there is no use in denying it: besides, the adorers in pink bonnets frown on all heretics who presume not to bow at the shrine. The fiery furnace of their indignation is heated seven times for such presumptuous offenders. Have I not seen the Saratoga beauties, one on each side of Adonis, fanning him, as he sat exhausted after an unusual effort? Do I not know Massachusetts blues, those cold and critical dames, who treasure up a finger of his glove, if haply they may catch some of the magnetism imparted by his inspired digits? What wonder if a young and handsome artist has his head turned by such adulation!

But I have wandered from the concert. The pianist's hand rambled for a while carelessly and affectedly over the key-board, but at last the interest of the music excited him. And though this rambling style is not without its charms, the intenser sort is what carries the hearers away. At first, Ludwig shakes his head somewhat vehemently, moves his legs nervously—but, it strikes me, rather more than even his passionate nature suggests, catches at bits of paper and conveys them to his kissable mouth (that adjective is a lady's), and chews them frantically. As the music approaches a climax, he marks the emphasis with his head still more emphatically—disorders his hyacinthine locks, especially the one that comes down over his forehead so negligently—chews harder than ever—raises his hands to a prodigious height as he

strikes the keys—waves his body—changes the position of his legs—but does all this so gracefully, and wildly, and naturally, that he ends by catching you up in his own enthusiasm; and, criticise as you may afterwards, at the time you are as foolish as he. The performance seems to me a mere performance, at first; but he works himself into the frenzy, and at last cannot help it if he would. All this he is shrewd enough to know contributes to his influence; but it probably assists his imagination, too. It is an intoxication to his excitable nature; it is, too, in part, the necessary expression of that nature.

But I should do the artist great injustice if I stopped here without talking of his music—so wild, so dreamy, so passionate; of his playing—so exquisite, so Chopin-like, so inspired. Gottschalk has the real artist temperament. The odor of heliotropes affects him prodigiously, and we all know how susceptible he is to the charms of beauty. Doubtless the reputation of his successes with the sex, and of his cruelty, adds zest to their admiration. At any rate, he plays just as one would imagine a poet in love to do: he plays poems, and dreams, and passions. He reminds one of the description of Chopin, consumptive and down-cast in that deserted abbey in Madeira, playing for hours passionate fantasies and weird-like strains to his mistress. He makes you forget the concert-room and the gaslights, your gloves and your lorgnette, and give yourself up to a sort of infatuation; you dream, you feel, you listen, you enjoy. This is all indefinite criticism; but those who appreciate Gottschalk will tell you if such is not the effect he produces. You are not inclined to talk of the precision of his touch, or to count his time; you lose sight of the mechanical means:

you are interested only in the result. Those melting strains, those wailing passages, those inspired, exalted bursts, what have they to do with demi-semi-quavers and two-four time? You might as well interrupt Rachel, in her imprecations on Rome, to parse the language of Corneille.

We forgive our gifted countryman all his foibles, and forget them, too, for the sake of the tremulous, rapturous music he makes for us. We need not wish him success among the wild, excitable southerners, towards whom he wends his way. He had heaped up his laurels before he came among us; though born here, his first triumphs were abroad. He first appealed to us for our plaudits when his head was already crowned with laurels placed there by the genius and the sovereigns of Europe. At the outset he was not appreciated, but he bided his time, and at last the harvest was ripe. He gave fifty concerts in New York last season, and at this moment is not only more a favorite than any American artist ever has been, among Americans, but better appreciated and better liked than any artist in the New World.

What a change from Gottschalk to Thalberg! The one all genius, the other all art; the one young, impassioned, irregular, fitful; the other middle-aged, calm, unimpassioned, but omniscient and omnipotent as far as his piano is concerned. Gottschalk surprises, moves, entrances; Thalberg diffuses serene pleasure, and performs unheard-of feats with perfect ease. One is Apollo, the other Jupiter. It is the old comparison; the real and the ideal, Rachel and Ristori, Kemble and Kean. One excites, the other soothes; one is intensely human, the other half divine. But there is no rivalry between the



two artists; their followers only contend, and how foolishly! Because a rose is sweet, must I not smell a violet? Because Naples is lovely, has Como no charms? A Vagabond can enjoy all the romance and the fervor of Gottschalk, and none the less appreciate the marvelous perfection of Thalberg.

Still the battle rages furiously in the saloons of the metropolis; rival forces attack each other at the opera and at morning visits. Not even the election campaign was half so bitter as this strife, which divides families and separates sets. Engagements are broken off, because the lover persists that Gottschalk's eyes have a greenish tinge; and I have lost more than one invitation for not avowing myself an open adherent of Thalberg.

Generally, the young muster under Gottschalk's banners. His beauty has subdued all the ladies under twenty-five (which includes all under thirty-five), while the young men find his music *faster* than Thalberg's, and so appreciate him better. But, with the last there is a spice of jealousy: they would support Gottschalk *en masse*, were it not he is so much admired by the pink bonnets; whereas the travelled people, the *blasé*, the critics, and that sort, prefer Thalberg. They like the music which it requires a more cultivated taste to appreciate, which it implies bad taste not to admire. So, some are in a quandary; they want to appear youthful, but would not for the world seem uncritical. What shall they do?

Thalberg's quiet ease and his unconstrained demeanor (which Mr. Willis said was shopboy-like), prepossessed me in his favor. He never seems making an effort. He is conscious of his greatness, but so

conscious that he need not obtrude it. He plays with perfect self-command. He has no inspirations, it is true ; —perhaps he has only talent ; but when talent is so marvellously accomplished, when it produces such effects, it is on a level with genius. The intricate and elaborate ornamentation in which Thalberg involves and wraps his theme, at the same time letting you hear that theme, is among the most wonderful effects of art. It affords me as much delight, though of an entirely different sort, as the rhapsodical snatches of his younger rival. Then, his mastery of his instrument we all know surpasses that of any man living, and at times extorts the homage of the most bigoted Gottschalkites. There are effects in his performance of *L'Elisir d'Amore*, of *Norma*, and of *Mose in Egitto*, which almost draw you to your feet. I have seen at these moments the most collected fashionables and the roughest-looking people in the room alike bursting with admiration, wonder and delight. Even the pink bonnets jump up here and there to see if he really does all that with one pair of hands. And it is not simply amazement that the master produces : the pleasure is exquisite enough to set one's nerves titillating, and that is my test of artistic excellence. Whatever affects my spinal marrow I consider first-rate, in music, acting, eloquence, or poetry.

There is, however, one thing finer than Thalberg's playing, and which both great armies of admirers will admit to excel the separate excellence of either, and that is the combined music made by the two. They recently played a duet together, and in all my musical experience, I have seldom listened to such ravishing harmony. The audience rose and shouted, and little

tiny hands in French gloves were clapped, and delicate lace fabrics were waved, and the two great artists came back to gather their laurels. It was beautiful in them both, to add thus to each other's glory. It was especially delicate in Gottschalk, who had reigned supreme until the very king of pianists came to claim the first place: it was delicate in him, I say, to show no spite nor jealousy. He has, it is true, relinquished the field, but gracefully. He stayed long enough after the arrival of Thalberg to show that he feared not even the greatest; but he chose not to contend. He takes with him the good wishes and hearty admiration of a crowd of pink bonnets and of a Vagabond.

I don't know whether I ought to say it, but I have lately heard that Gottschalk powders his face so prodigiously that his eyes look smaller than they really are. It is, however, but just to add that my informant wears a straw-colored bonnet.

## THORWALDSEN.

“—Able to breathe life into a stone.”

*All's Well that Ends Well.*

THERE is an evident affinity between the Scandinavian character and that of the Anglo-Saxon race. Sprung, indeed, from the same stock, speaking cognate languages, each with the blue eyes and flaxen hair that mark their northern origin, it is not remarkable that the two branches of one great family resemble each other in national and individual traits. The gods of England and of Iceland were the same. Our forefathers worshipped Odin; and Thor and Woden, the divinities of the north, are still commemorated in the names we Christians give to the days of the week. The same warm-hearted but reserved character, the same silent tongue, resolute look and strong arm, bear witness to the ancient kindred. But especially in that development of character which is exhibited in art is this likeness apparent. The heroes of Ossian and the Norsemen of Icelandic sagas are german to each other. Goethe and Shakspeare are not dissimilar; Jenny Lind found a warmer welcome in English and American homes than captious Parisian critics would accord; and Frederika Bremer's works are better known among us than in continental Europe. Our national mind appreciates Scandinavian art.

And in that form of art in which American genius has

compelled the acknowledgment of unwilling Europe, in which only America has yet taken a position at all worthy of her material greatness, there too has the Danish character found its highest development. The field where Powers and Greenough have reaped their laurels, is that where Thorwaldsen has achieved his triumphs. It is fitting then that hither should have been sent some of the worthiest productions of the great Scandinavian artist. To the new world, and to its commercial emporium, have come specimens of the glories of Bertel Thorwaldsen, of those works that his countrymen have garnered up from Rome and Berlin, and all over Europe, and treasured in a great museum called after his own name.

At the Crystal Palace are now the original plaster models of the "Christ and His Apostles," whose marble copies stand in the Frue Kirke, at Copenhagen; and in a little room on Broadway (No. 297), may be seen many of Thorwaldsen's famous bas-reliefs,—the works of the artist whom his nation delighted to honor, the first sculptor of modern times.

Statuary seems to be that form of art in which northern nations most delight to clothe their ideas of the beautiful. Whether it is that colder natures find the stone a fitting symbol of the calm which distinguishes them; whether its unchangeableness aptly represents the character of temperate races, would be hard to say. But causes such as these do influence mind and its development. Painting, with its warmth of color and its powers of passionate expression, seems better suited for the mobile inhabitants of the south, who have ever excelled in the pictorial art. And indeed, when the old Greeks resorted to statuary, they were fain to color their marble: the Parian stone was all too cold for their torrid tempera-

ments. Ivory and gold adorned the statues of Phidias, and blue and gorgeous red enlivened the images of gods and men admired by the Athenians. Our chaster but possibly not more correct taste, rejects these ornaments; and though an attempt has been made by a modern Italian to revive the mode, critics of France and England disapprove. However, whatever cause may exist, the fact is undoubted, that the sculptor's art in later centuries is prosecuted with most success by the children of the north.

Cold, the passionate southerners call us. They, brimful of life, and their blood boiling under the rays of a torrid sun, cannot endure our comparative immobility; but, in this again, the statue images our character—not fickle, not changeable, but when after years of labor and toil, excellence is accomplished, it is fixed as the marble. Neither is the northern character destitute of a susceptibility to genius and to beauty; of a power to render the whisperings of nature in music as exquisite as that which Italians warble; to fashion the ideal into forms of everlasting grace and dignity; to compel even Rome to contend for the residence of Danish and American artists. Witness Crawford and Thorwaldsen his master.

No more splendid and beautiful representative of Scandinavian art ever existed than Albert Bertel Thorwaldsen. The child of the people, he became the companion of kings. Born of poor and humble parentage, a nation mourned over his funeral, and genius, rank, and beauty made part of the pageant of his life. His own genius was the personification of the æsthetic spirit of his race. All its wild beauty, all its delicate grace, all its majesty, all its depth of feeling and imaginative sentiment, find expression in his works. The exquisite poetry of an Undine is embodied, though under another name, by

him. The sublime religious feeling, innate in the race, that feeling which pervades the mythology of the north; the genius of their poetry, the meaning of their superstition, the warmth of their hearts, are all uttered in his creations. To be sure, they find other names: the religious sentiment is embodied in his "Christ and Apostles," while the lighter graces sought the classic lore of Greece and Rome for illustration; but it is the national spirit that has expression in either. Then the absence in all his works of the southern passion is equally remarkable. Fulness of feeling he has indeed; but no passionate Niobe or Laocoon, no Dying Gladiator gives vent to the over-charged heart or indicates the dramatic intensity that animates artists born in the sunny south. Of tearful meaning there is plenty—but none of the wild fervor or divine agony of southern art.

The finest creation of his genius is that which adorns the Crystal Palace. The figures are of the original size, are from the hand of Thorwaldsen himself, and save that they may lack the rounded fulness that only marble can display, are said to be in every way equal to the proudest ornaments of Copenhagen. They have all the beauty of form, the anatomical correctness, the wonderful expression, the graceful fall of drapery, and the classic severity which distinguish the others. The Christ stands colossal in size, godlike in attitude, full of benignity, beautiful as Raphael would have conceived, and grand as Michael Angelo would have executed, saying to the assembled disciples: "Come unto me." The gentleness of the invitation, the mingled mildness and majesty of the countenance, the union of power and love, are triumphs of the sculptor. The apostles, larger than

life, but inferior in size to the master, are grouped around, each elevated on a pedestal, each distinguished by his appropriate symbol—St. John by the lamb, St. Peter by the keys—but each marked yet more plainly by his individual expression; Thomas doubts and Peter promises, Paul preaches and John loves. The expression in attitude, and limb, and lineament, leaves no room to doubt their individuality.

The height of the figures contributes very greatly to their effect. Size always conveys the idea of grandeur, and the increased magnitude of the Christ is in accordance with the most approved canons of art. Their being elevated above the spectator, also, forces one to look upwards, and contributes to the sentiment of awe with which we regard them. But more than these minutiae, the genius which is instinct in them makes them among the greatest specimens of Christian art ever executed. They are a sermon in themselves. They preach love, and charity, and truth; they speak of the Divine calm and holy peace of the God-man, they tell of Calvary and Gethsemane.

The exquisite angel form supporting the font is unrivalled in grace, and extremely admired by European critics. William Howitt, perhaps best fitted by his intimate acquaintance with Scandinavian literature, and by his being so imbued with the spirit as well as the lore of the north, to criticise and to feel the meaning of Thorwaldsen, declares the effect upon himself of this angel form to be magical; but it has always seemed to me incongruous—unfitted for the group, or for its original purpose. Graceful and beautiful—airy, angelic, if you will—it always suggests to me the supernatural creations



of the northern mythology, rather than those of Christian belief. Holding a sea-shell for a font, it recalls to my mind the fascinating creatures of the sea—Undine, or those fair beings who beguiled mortals to their homes beneath the ocean. I cannot look at it in connexion with the Christ, and not feel an unfitness.

Notwithstanding that Thorwaldsen is the embodiment of his national art, he is yet equally happy in portraying classic fable. Deeply imbued with the feeling of Greek and Roman mythology, he brings vividly before us the white-armed Andromache, and the crest-shaking Hector. He illustrates the odes of Anacreon with an exquisite felicity and a truth of rendering entirely unequalled. His Bacchus is the very god of wine—crowned with vine leaves, naked, revelling, intoxicated with joy and pleasure, but refined, radiant, beautiful with it all; his Venus is not coarse, though sensual; his heroes are indeed demi-gods. At the same time, the original poetic fancies in which he indulges, the creations which his own imagination calls forth, are remarkable for beauty and delicacy of thought, grace of execution, severity of taste and finish of style. His “Day and Night,” and his “Four Seasons,” are poems equal to the most subtile fancies of Sappho or Shelley. Sentiment is embodied in them; love and beauty are breathed over them. It is not often that on this continent lovers of the beautiful can feast their eyes at such a banquet; can improve and correct their tastes in such a school. But those who look longingly across the seas to Dresden and Florence may visit these productions and envy not the owners of Corregios; may for awhile forget the Venus of the Tribune, and the Apollo of the Vatican.

## THE MATINÉES.

"I am advised to give her music o' mornings.  
They say it will penetrate."

*Cymbeline.*

SHE seems to like the prescription. It must penetrate. The manager was well advised to give her music o' mornings. Indeed, if I were fitted to advise opera managers, I should say, repeat the dose *ad infinitum*; or as often as the patient will bear it. Mr. Ullman might abandon altogether the exploded fashion of giving operatic entertainments at night; we can all amuse ourselves so much better by daylight. I say *we*, deliberately; for though the matinées doubtless originated in a devilish desire to tempt the weaker sex, yet, when the woman declared the apple good, Adam thought he might relish it too. Though, at first, only the daughters of Eve attended the music o' mornings, the sons and grand-sons have of late been as numerous. At the last matinée there must have been a thousand men. And not only fashionable fellows; not only young men about town, or vagabonds whom you might expect to find following in the wake of woman, or lazily lounging in the lobbies of the Academy by day as well as by night. I saw great historians stand all the morning in the parquet; and reverend divines gazing through their long-

nettes when Soto danced ; and South-street merchants comfortably ensconced in their boxes during 'Change hours. All the beaux were there of course : endeavoring to penetrate the mass of crinoline, and, for the sake of being agreeable to one woman, making themselves disagreeable to twenty ; sitting on the floor of the boxes close between two chairs occupied by their female friends ; peering in through the half-open doors of the first circle ; promenading in the *foyer*, and stopping at each turn before the long mirrors to pull up their collars and fasten their cravats ; or waiting around the entrance for the hegira. All the belles were there, for they had nothing else to do ; they wanted to kill a morning, and then they were so fond of music ; and William might chance to leave the office in time to stop on his way up town ; and if they should meet Tom as they appointed yesterday.

The women, at first, used to think themselves alone and unobserved at these matinées. And then you should have observed them. They went prying around the lobbies ; they stalked into the proscenium boxes without leave ; they climbed into the amphitheatre ; they tried the stage-door ; they were rude to each other, crowded and jostled, and said naughty words, and looked daggers, and I believe even pinched and trod on toes—purposely, too : they certainly tore the laces, and sat on the camels'-hair shawls of their neighbors. They went hours before the time, and crowded around the entrance, pounding at the doors, and demanding admission so vehemently that at last the manager was obliged to allow them access earlier than at the time stated in the bills ; they stood immediately in front of the private

boxes ; they took out chairs from the same ; they sat on the edges ; and, one morning, two Brobdignagians nearly smothered Gulliver, who was in the back seat of a box, by flinging their shawls, and furs, and crinolines over his shoulders. I do not, of course, imagine that any of my fair readers were guilty of these solecisms ; that any of them opened the doors of secured boxes ; that they pushed in the aisles, and scolded in the lobbies ; that they quarrelled with the ushers, and berated the doorkeepers ; but surely, ladies, you must have seen the women who did these things. Doubtless you were as much annoyed as any one at such conduct. Doubtless you have remarked the change in behavior since more men have attended the *matinées*. Well, was it not shocking ? And to what do you attribute the reformation ? It can't be that the softer sex need the refining influence of ours to render their manners bland. It can't be that when our charmers are alone they behave in this way ; that all the graces are put on for the sake of us ; that the natural woman is such as was manifested at the first *matinées*. " Oh ! no ; on those earlier occasions it was not so fashionable to attend. A different class of women went, and, of late, more ladies have been present ; and therefore, Mr. Vagabond, you perceive a difference. No impertinent insinuations, sir." " I assure you, madam, I did not intend any ; you furnish, of course, the only explanation that could present itself to a reasonable mind."

The *matinées* are a mystery to me. What in heaven's name the people go for I can't imagine. They can't see each other : the house is so miserably lighted that the best lorgnette only gives you a headache to use ; they

don't dress fine, so you might as well walk the street; you can't show your own clothes, nor criticise your acquaintances'; very few men can get around to visit; you can't flirt and chatter as you could at the classic Philharmonic rehearsals; the crowd is so great that locomotion is uncomfortable; hundreds of the audience stand during the entire performance—women as well as men. And it does me good to see the malicious creatures obliged to stand. When I think how often I have had to get up in a railroad car for some one who bounced into my place without as much as a "Thank ye," I'm glad to observe them looking weary and worn out. I go into a private box on purpose to let them see a man at his ease, while they rest first on one leg, and then on the other, like a chicken at roost. But why does all the world go to the matinées? I believe in the musical taste of New York. I believe in it very firmly. I swear by the amateurs; and know twenty young ladies who sing well enough for prima donnas, besides a thousand people who doat on the last opera, whatever it may be; but they can all go in the evening; they do. Why, then, should they crowd in the daytime, when no place is secured? I myself am indifferent musical, but I don't like opera well enough to stand three hours in a dark place with a bonnet and feathers stuck right in my eyes, and steel hoops knocking my knees on every side, even to listen to Laborde or to look at Piccolomini. I am not a regular *habitué* of the matinées. I go for an hour, and gaze, and wonder, and come away.

There is but one way to account for the phenomenon, and that is, to say that matinées are the rage. Everybody goes because everybody else goes. Everybody

likes to be in a crowd, perceives the electric influence there evolved, gets *en rapport* with the music, thinks better, and brighter, and faster, talks quicker and shrewder, feels more acutely, enjoys more keenly.

The performers themselves are not unsusceptible to this magnetism ; they sing and act better, and so exert a reacting influence. Thus out of the bitter comes forth sweetness ; artistic excellence results from fashionable folly. For all these people cannot listen to the splendid strains of passionate music, callous, or indifferent, or foolish though the majority may be, without many of them feeling the refining and ennobling effects. And not only the ear is touched, and through that the brain, and nerve, and soul, but the lust of the eye and the pride of life are gratified. The magnificent theatre crowded with human beings ; tier above tier of heads and faces ; the very obscurity making the hall look larger as well as dimmer ; the strange effect of the stage and the singers seen in this half light ; all make a confused sort of picture on the retina like the remembrance of a dream. The faces in the distance seem unreal and shadowy, the lights flicker, the pageant wavers, but remains ; the restlessness of these thousands contrasted with their occasional and absolute silence to listen to a great air or a particular singer, this, too, has a strange fascination for some natures ; this brings some hither.

For all is not nonsense that seems so ; many and many of those you meet in society are not so shallow as you think ; many receive vivid impressions from the gaiety of a scene who you imagine are absorbed in frivolity. While a man stands paying silly compliments to some little flirt just out this season, his eye takes in not

only the fresh and budding charms before him, but all the brilliancy of the ball. The gaily-decorated room; the lofty walls covered with mirrors and pictures; statues peering from behind the heavy curtains; flowers, and frescoes, and gilding, and columns, making up the background; dazzling light streaming down on the restless throng; beautiful women clad in elegant and dainty garments; gallant men saying courteous things; young forms bearing the lovely maidens swiftly in the dance; tossing plumes, sparkling jewels, subtle perfumes; white arms, half exposed; exquisite bosoms, shrouded in delicate laces: then the music of soft voices and gentle tones and subdued laughter, with some inspiriting strain from a distant band; all this furnishes an intoxication, a sort of *délire* to an imaginative nature, that is not easily resisted.

Should you get accustomed to the sight, enter the ball-room; notice the merry feet of the dancers as they glide swiftly by in the mazes of the redowa; feel your own blood tingle as the robes of a woman you admire are swept hurriedly by, and the influence of the wine mounts up to your brain; catch the inspiration of the music and the moment, and approach some fair girl radiant with youth and beauty, whose eyes beam softly and gladly when you ask her to join the dance. Lay your arm around the taper waist that otherwise you scarce dare think of, feel her soft breath on your cheek, her finger clasped in yours; and if the excitement of society is not then quite entrancing, you are not susceptible. Quicker and quicker becomes the movement of the music; faster and faster you whirl on; as your partner pants with the rapid motion and the sympathetic excite-

ment, she rests more closely on you for support, and all her pulses beat in unison with yours. Ah, me! could one always be dancing! Do you remember the German princess who waltzed to Strauss's music till she died? What wonder? And yet the blues and the old fogies can't understand why the young people like society, what charm there is in dancing. Well, when our blood gets cold, and our imagination dull, perhaps we shall wonder too. Thank heaven! that time is not come yet!

The *matinée* is not so great a mystery after all. Music o' mornings; they say it will penetrate.



## MEYERBEER.

“Is it not strange that sheep’s guts should hale souls  
Out of men’s bodies.”

*Much Ado about Nothing.*

SOME people say it is not the sheep’s guts, nor the women’s voices, nor the music of “The Huguenots” that is so powerful in haling our souls, but the painted gardens and the glistening robes, and the prancing horses, and the illuminated barges, and the crowds of supernumeraries that have made “The Huguenots” the talk of the town. And, doubtless, the pageantry does its share; doubtless very many who would never be attracted to the opera by the sublime strains of the conjuration chorus, or the magnificent intensity of the great duet, find the pomp and circumstance worth seeing. But among those who understand the language of music, who need no interpreter to explain the significance of Raoul’s notes or Valentina’s song, whose temperament answers back to every sob or pæan of the tune, there are not many who fail to find expression and meaning in Meyerbeer. I know, indeed, those who speak of the paucity of his ideas; who declare he is remarkable only for his learning; who can or will perceive in his music none of the subtile influences that Verdi, and Rossini, and Mozart wield. There are those who call him cold;

who say he creates no melodies; who acknowledge no inspiration in Giacomo Meyerbeer. I do not understand this in people susceptible to musical impressions. I cannot conceive of music more crowded with thought, more pregnant with meaning, more profoundly passionate than Meyerbeer's is, by turns. How can he be said to lack feeling, who wrote the "*Robert, toi que j'aime ?*" How can he be called cold to whom we owe the "*Ah, mon fils ?*" How can he be deemed uninspired who penned the strains in that wonderful duet between Raoul and Valentina, where every passion is compressed into music, where a language infinitely superior to that of words, or gestures, or looks, is given to the subtlest and intensest feeling of our nature ?

But music is like mythology : it is Janus-faced ; it has one side for the multitude, and another for those who penetrate behind the veil. In the days of Homer and Menander, the fables of antiquity were all true for the vulgar, though the philosophers saw in them a hidden meaning, a life and a beauty that have endured till now, when their religious influence has been dead for centuries. Those who would might then discover that Hercules was a personification, that the legend of Prometheus had a double import, that Venus symbolized more than sensual pleasure, and those who care, may now find in music a deeper significance, a profounder interest, than it awakens in the bosoms of most listeners. To many, an opera is a refined luxury, an artificial pleasure, an aristocratic taste, exquisite, sensual, and nothing more ; but does any man suppose that the profound students, the great artists, the poets, the thinkers of the old world, who listen nightly to the strains of Rossini and Beetho-

ven, find in them a mere sensual titillation—a mere intoxication as intense and enervating as that of wine?—that they go to the opera because it is the fashion? And in America, how is it that despite of prejudice, despite of mismanagement and quarrels, high prices and Astor-Place riots, opera, an exotic, has taken root in this furiously native soil? Why is it that, all the world over, it has supplanted the drama in the estimation of the cultivated and the refined? A mere fashion lasts not so long as this; extends not from Mexico to St. Petersburg, from Paris to San Francisco. And the taste for the amusement is not confined to a fashionable class. Thousands are fascinated by music who never clothe their hands in the skin of kid before they applaud, and who listen without the aid of opera-cloaks and dress-coats to assist their sense of hearing. The truth is, music speaks an universal language: it speaks to the soul; it is the form in which the feeling of this age finds its fullest and freest development.

Indeed, all art is something more than a luxury: it has its meaning like the symbolism of the Roman Catholic religion. Ignorant or grovelling minds may worship the statue and forget the saint—may bow at the shrine and wonder at the lamp; but he who knows what the meaning of all this is, sees and receives another influence. He only is the true worshipper, and this, too, whether the artist feels his mission or not. The unworthiness of the priest affects not the validity of the sacrament; and the vanity or worldliness of the artist interferes not materially with the emotions he excites in another.

Art, in other times, has been expressed in other ways. The old Greeks gave vent to their love for the beautiful

in the more tangible forms of architecture and sculpture, and the temples and statues that delighted the ancients \* have never since been surpassed. In the middle ages, it burst into flower in painting, and the gorgeous creations of the Italian masters were the result. To-day, art finds its development in music. Our painting is poor and our sculpture is cold, compared with the passion and poetry that breathe in the music of the nineteenth century; and if we must yield the palm to other ages in other arts, here we can claim a super-excellence. The ancients had no conception of the power of music; the moderns, until now, have been groping before the dawn of that day in whose meridian splendor we are basking. Compare the fugues and the cathedral music of two centuries back with the harmonic glories ushered in by Gluck, and brought to perfection by Beethoven and Mozart! Compare even the discoveries of Palestrina with the science of Meyerbeer!

And if music culminates to-day, it is because it is the truest exponent of the feeling of the present age. Emotions too subtle for other embodiment, sentiments too fleeting, passions too intense, feelings too profound even for poetry, are here all told; and especially do I recognise in the music of this century the utterance of that feeling which struggles for expression in the deeper literature of the time—the wild unrest, the earnestness, the uncertainty of Tennyson, of Carlyle, of George Sand, of Margaret Fuller, are all expressed in the sublime music of modern composers, are all expressed in Meyerbeer. The pretty strains of Auber may do for some; the passion of Donizetti and the intensity of Verdi, perhaps, are the fit correlatives of the outside

turbulence and revolutionary spirit of our age; the exquisite flow of Rossini and the divine calm of Mozart are soothing and religious; but only the awful terror and unearthly wildness, the supernatural grandeur and unequalled sublimity, the fierce struggles and piercing agonies of Meyerbeer, combine all the characteristics of this era.

“*Robert le Diable*” tells of the spirit which breathes in Goethe’s “*Faust*,” and pervades every page of the earnest literature of England, France, Germany, and America—the peering into forbidden secrets, the dealing with more than earthly beings;—the scepticism, the doubt, the anxiety, the terror, and the struggle. Who that has ever heard the “*Robert, toi que j’aime*”—that piercing wail of a spirit that is bound—that cry to man to save himself—but has thrilled with an intense reality that made him forget the pageant of the stage. For my part, I shut my eyes, and care nothing for the mimic life there represented; the great genius has spoken to an inner being. The calm of Alice, the wildness of the incantation scene, the gloom that shrouds Bertram as with a garment, and the humanity of Robert, are all told as no poet ever told them. Robert is equal to Faust, Alice is greater than Gretchen. They stand out individualized as distinctly in our memories as the creations of the greatest of poets, or the figures of the greatest of painters.

Another such magnificent subject could not be found as the strife of a demon for his son, with the simple, pure peasant girl of Normandy, and the struggle of that son, beset by the entreaties of love and the seductions of hell! It is the history of every man; it is

the grand problem of life interpreted into sound; it is the very mystery of being, set before us.

Then in "Le Prophète" how vividly do we see the Ana-baptists! How wonderful a creation is Fidès! How natural the variable Jean of Leyden—now triumphant, now yielding, now lost—a type again of man! And Fidès, with all the fervor and intensity of woman—woman in her purest, truest, noblest aspect, the mother—all compressed into the "*Ah, mon fils!*" which rivals the "*Robert, toi que j'aime!*" in depth of pathos, sublimity of expression, and intensity of meaning.

These are the glories, the marvellous works of Meyerbeer. He has not the dramatic feeling of Donizetti, nor perhaps the *élan* which Italian composers infuse into the expression of earthly passion. He does not represent love as they do; but when something more than human is to be told, when something clear from every stain of human dross is to be expressed—the cry of a mother over a son, or the appeal of a woman to her lover to save himself—Meyerbeer is equal to the emergency. No guilty raptures, no Favorita, no Norma, does he portray; but the sublime purity of an Alice, or the holy fervor of a Fidès.

I have not spoken technically of this composer. I leave it to others to dilate upon the means by which he produces his effects: it is my task to treat of those effects and tell how he influences me. His learning and his science are great and manifest; his combinations are peculiar, and his method superb. Others, if they choose, may treat of these; it is enough for me to confess his power, to recognise his genius; for it is the truest test of Meyerbeer's glories that he

awakens your sympathies, he touches your feelings quite as truly as any of his rivals. He does not electrify, he does not take you by storm, but he catches hold of some string that is twined close around the heart; he strikes some nerve that helps him to "hale souls out of men's bodies."

## MATILDA HERON.

"She is sad and passionate."

*King John.*

THE night of the twenty-second of January was cold and uninviting. There was no opera, and I know not why I was anxious to witness the *début* of a Western actress at Wallack's theatre; but it was fated, and I sallied forth into the snow. I sat in the orchestra, and was not at all crowded. There came upon the stage a fine woman, with an easy manner, and who spoke two or three words in a natural tone. I was surprised at the phenomenon, and attended to what she should do or say next. Of course I was amazed at her daring portrayal of Camille; but when the curtain fell at the end of the first act I acknowledged the spell of genius. As the play went on I became absorbed; by-and-by, eye and ear were both touched by an electricity that reached brain and heart; and ere the climax, I had experienced such a wrenching and tightening of emotions, such a whirlwind of feeling, as made criticism impossible. All I had to do was to give myself up to the sway of the magician, to be swept away by the torrent of enthusiasm in which the whole audience was involved.

I went again shortly, and again, and again. Each time excitement was almost painful. Not tears spoke the



depth of feelings that were roused, but absolute exhaustion declared their power. It was not until familiarity with the performance of "Camille" had in some measure blunted my susceptibility that I was able calmly to criticise. Seldom, in a theatre, had my inmost nature been so stirred as by this new actress. "Medea" came next: it was not modern; I was prepared to judge severely, and by comparison with the highest standard; yet, even in this play, I felt at times the same overpowering influence, the same shaking of nerve and thrilling of frame.

Miss Heron is emotional: it is your feelings that she rouses, your heart that she speaks to, your soul that she stirs. The brain, the intellect, is not untouched; but when you get time to take breath from your own sobs, and wipe your eyes from the blinding mist that will rise; when you rest your ears from the burden of those passionate accents, there is much in her acting that you do not admire. But admire her or not, I defy you to remain calm. Still, it is well to analyse her remarkable powers.

And first of all is her naturalness. This first demands applause from the most discerning critic, and ends by provoking cavils. This first forces itself upon your notice, this first rivets your attention; this is the great secret of her acting—is her talent, ay, and her art. Surely naturalness cannot be decried. And yet this is not only her great peculiarity, it is, perhaps, her fault. She is absolutely too natural. She portrays a character exactly as it is, not only without one touch of grace not its own, but with every touch of awkwardness belonging to it. She not only adds nothing, but subtracts nothing. She not only idealizes not, refines not, elevates

not; she eliminates nothing of coarse or displeasing; she spares no harrowing thought, no disgusting minutiae; she is not only terrible in her life-likeness, but at times offensive. And yet this very offensiveness adds to her thrall over you: you are held in spite of your dislike, because of it. The vulgarity of the earlier scenes in "Camille" is fearful in its truthfulness, but effective as well; the repulsiveness of the sick-bed scene is painfully real. And here Miss Heron differs from any other actress I have seen. All others refine, in some degree, either by throwing a charm around a character that it cannot really claim, or by concealing defects which it absolutely possesses. Here, too, Miss Heron differs especially from the great French actress, with whom she has sometimes been compared; for this western performer has indeed thrust herself into the foremost rank, and is to be judged only by comparison with the foremost. As she is great, she must in many things be like her who is greatest; but in her naturalness she differs from the Jewess.

Rachel's conception was always idealized, was always unreal. Her exquisite taste, her refined intellectuality, made all things common and inferior seem unreal to her; whatever she looked upon became in her eyes refined and elevated. And her execution corresponded with this idea. She was the living embodiment of Greek poetry and Greek statuary; she was the spirit of antiquity made manifest in the flesh; she was what Æschylus and Euripides dreamed of, what Praxiteles fancied ere he formed. She was what educated men of all time have since imagined the Roman maiden and the Grecian queen to have been, possibly superior even to the reality:

Phædra could not have been more stately in her grace, nor Camilla more severe in her beauty, than their modern representative. Nor was either wilder in her woe or more terrific in her wrath; probably both Pasiphae's daughter and the Alban's bride, in the storm of passion, lost or lacked some degree of that superlative grace that still crowned in Rachel the highest and fiercest abandonment. When she writhed in the agony of guilty love, or hurled denunciations on Rome, beyond the magnificent personation of passion, there was the strange beauty of attitude, the marvellous music of intonation. These gratified the taste, while the intellect was satisfied at the representation.

But was not the heart untouched? Thrills of real horror Rachel did excite, the terrible emotions she did sway; but tears she could not reach, tenderer feelings she could not evoke. When she essayed modern life, she descended from her pedestal: she was no better than others. In her own exalted region of high art, she was unapproachable; but it was as really unreal as the palaces of Olympus, or the personations of the opera. Grant that she was to give you a poetic conception, a realization of your visions of Hermione and Cassandra, and you must admit that she accomplished what she aimed at; but ask if women, even in those days, did things according to rule, raged in such divine attitudes, or stormed in such magnificent tones, and you might as well suppose that their ordinary language was measured into hexameters, or their passions expressed in odes.

Then, again, Rachel was cold; beautiful, but so statue-like. Now, Miss Heron is the reverse of all this: she is not modelled, she is not stereotyped; she has an inspi-

ration of the moment. Seeing Rachel once in a certain part, you had seen her always: she never changed. True, why should she? She had reached perfection; change must be for the worse; and she never changed, for better or worse. But this new aspirant is impulsive, fitful, variable; undecided even. She changes her execution too much; sometimes omits fine touches, slurs over to-night what last night was most carefully portrayed, or makes wonderfully vivid what to-morrow may seem of less account. But she has not reached the acme of her art; she is not sure of herself, she is poisoning her wing; she is trying her strength.

Miss Heron is not the calm, collected, self-possessed woman that a perfect artist is; but though she has more blemishes for that, she has some greater excellences for the same reason. She paints not with the exactitude of a Denner nor of a Raphael; but some touches are only the gift of inspiration. She is yet a novice, has much to learn, has capabilities undeveloped; but the true gifts are there: those which scarcely need cultivation, only direction, only restraint, only development, which transcend all effects of culture, all results of art. This resolves itself again into nature. She is not only true to the nature that she plays, but true to her own nature. By looking to the one she is just to the other. Her attitudes are not indeed studies of grace, but they are easy, at least, and sometimes brimful of passion, although she never achieves that wonderful expression of feeling in her whole form that Rachel accomplished. She has not the anatomical control of her muscles and limbs that the Frenchwoman possessed. Still, of all women who have ever played in America, she ranks next after Rachel in

this respect. Then her voice is not trained to cadences of such mellifluous melody ; she preserves not the music of intonation that marked the great tragic queen in all the depth of woe or fiercest bursts of imprecation. Miss Heron sometimes seems even to lose control of her vocal organs, and her elocution is often far from perfect but there is a weight of passion in her accents that I confess I did not always find in Rachel's. This is, however, only when expressing intense womanly passion ; for in embodying horror and terror Miss Heron comes far short of her own conception.

She is not gifted with the talents requisite for the highest tragic parts ; her imprecations degenerate into rant, her gestures are strained, her voice is utterly incapable of the fiercest expression, and she does not herself feel with the intensity with which she does other parts. She fails here ; of course, only by comparison with the highest ; still she fails. But she has her revenge : if she is not a sybil or a fury ; if she plays neither Eumenides nor Niobe ; if she lacks the statuesque majesty and the splendor of poetry and marble, or even which we have been wont to look for in the drama, she is more womanly than any actress who speaks the English tongue.

She is of this day. Modern life is her field ; but only because in portraying modern life she portrays emotions common to humanity. When she plays Medea, and begs her children to come to the maternal bosom, "the breasts that fed ye, the heart that gave ye life," she strikes a chord that would have waked an answering throb in Grecian mothers, that would have forced tears from them and wrung their heart-strings, when Rachel would

only have provoked their admiration. In the humanity deeper than all distinctions of race, in the instincts common to Greek and Puritan, here is this new actress greatest. She moves not with the stately step of Jason's queen, but she sinks on her knees and yearns towards her little ones as mothers in all ages would do, and cries to them with a harrowing tenderness for the absence of which stateliness could never atone.

So in her love-scenes. Rachel could not love—at least on the stage: she was too intellectual; but Miss Heron is more of the woman; none of the statue about her; her full bust beats with the pulses of a sensuous nature; her eye, that glares not with the snake-like, withering power of Rachel, burns with intense tenderness, and is radiant with an ecstasy of joy that the other knew not of; her voice, though it breaks, and is harsh or whimpering, yet tells the true language of passion; its tones touch nerves that Rachel could never strike; its accents provoke tears, that none other can so wonderfully excite.

So she has a field all her own; not classic, not ideal, not terrible; but womanly, passionate, human. As yet her studies are incomplete. Continued labor, the culture of her taste, and the practice of her profession, will finish and polish her style; but never give her the marvellous refinement of some, or the striking nobleness of others. She has her special traits, wherein she is super-eminent; wherein others fall as far short of her, as she of them. Her excellence in these is surpassing, and in these, if she is wise, will she trust.

## E. H. CHAPIN.

"'Tis time we were at church."

*Taming the Shrew.*

I HAVE always had a taste for theology. I read sermons with as much interest as poems, study Jeremy Taylor and the judicious Hooker as ardently as their contemporaries, Massinger and Ford, and go as readily to hear Dr. Hawks or Dr. Bellows as I would to see a picture or play. And it is not simply for the intellectual gratification that I read or listen; though I enjoy the elaborate declamation of the French preachers, and love to fancy that I hear Bourdaloue or Bossuet delivering funeral orations in Notre Dame, or Barrow and Louth uttering their fine ideas in nervous English; though my taste is gratified by the elegant language of Mr. Osgood, and my feelings sometimes stirred by the eloquence of the blind Milburn; yet I find another interest in the pulpit, a profounder concern, a different feeling from that which mere dilettanteism in preaching can arouse. The subject which should engage the efforts of the preacher is to me all-absorbing: I read and listen with quicker sensibility, with livelier attention, with more earnest thoughtfulness when religion is the theme.

Herein I am not fashionable. The world of New York goes to church in the morning for the sake of

respectability, or in the evening for the sake of amusement. It goes on Sunday to hear Dr. Chapin just as it goes the next night to see Miss Heron, for the sake of the sensation. It likes to criticise; to censure, or applaud the poetical quotation, the overdone rhetoric, the hackneyed morality, the large humanity of this popular preacher. It does not go to have doubts allayed, questions settled, spirits cheered, fears dispelled; if it did, it would be disappointed. But as it wants only surface preaching, it is satisfied. As it has no doubts, or thoughts, or cares, the shallow tide of Dr. Chapin's oratory floats it along; as it is not deeply religious, it likes his sermons. I fancy I see my readers holding up their hands at this paragraph. Is the Vagabond also among the prophets!—the Vagabond talking about deep religious feeling! But even the gayest may have moments of thought; those most immersed in the cares or pleasures of the world may have times of hankering after something else; the most indifferent may occasionally remember, occasionally reflect. The Vagabond pretends to be no better than the rest of the world: the Vagabond is thoughtless, indifferent, absorbed, it may be, in the materialism of the age; but he and his readers at times feel or think on theological topics; at times long to learn the mystery of humanity, to solve the problem of destiny, to look into eternity.

I appeal to my young readers if it is not so. If you have acute sensibilities, warm feelings, quick perceptions, do not these very qualities at times oblige you to consider religious subjects? Does not the very vividness with which we, the young, enjoy this life, does not the intensity of our pleasure itself suggest another existence?



Does not the brightness of life, by comparison, call up death? Does not the banquet ever have the skeleton at the board, if only to add zest to the wine? Does not the beauty of the fresh garland remind us how quickly it is withered? Then, too, all intensity has a dash of something unearthly in it; genius is allied to divinity; and this art, in its different forms, this art which I preach and love—music, sculpture, poetry, painting, the drama—has something elevating, links us with what is more than human, reaches out after the infinite. Those who are most susceptible to its influences must appreciate what I say. I speak not now of the thoughtful: they, of course, ponder on the most important of all concerns. I speak of the young and gay. They, too, have their moods of contemplation, their hours of soberness, when the awful uncertainty which surrounds us, the gloom of futurity, the tremendous interests of humanity will present themselves. We recover from these influences, we rush more eagerly to pleasure after a Lenten abstinence; we go more gladly to the dance after a pause in the music, but we must acknowledge the reality of the influence.

If we go to hear Dr. Chapin in one of these moods, what shall we think of him? That he gives us chaff; that he is showy and unsubstantial; intent on saying fine things; pleased with the jingle of his own sentences, and delighted with the glitter of his own ideas, but utterly unsatisfactory to an earnest, craving mind. His fanciful conceits, his extravagant rhetoric, his swelling verbiage is at all times distasteful to a true culture; but when one goes longing for truth, for earnestness, for help, all this is offensive. It is thrusting the man—the speaker—between you and God: it is mockery.

Dr. Chapin never satisfies me : his ideas are always trite, his treatment commonplace, his philosophy what you may learn in the "Elegant Extracts" or the "English Reader." Prettinesses of speech are substituted for real thought ; sentimentality takes the place of reasoning ; a large-minded charity, a generous morality, is held up as the host to which all must bow down. But important questions he ever shirks. He may touch on fashion, but not on faith ; he may dilate on temperance or truthfulness, but he discusses not eternity ; he avoids the profounder problems that perplex all thoughtful minds. He is good-natured and genial, he lends a helping hand to every good work, he says a good word for every new enterprise, he preaches about to-day, which is all very well. He has a fling at every folly ; a sneer at every scepticism in which he does not himself share ; a stroke, and sometimes a right heavy one, at every wrong, no matter how gigantic in its proportions, or venerable in its antiquity, or imposing in its strength. He sympathizes rightly or wrongly, but earnestly, with every movement which he believes to be for the amelioration of the race. Perhaps his judgment is wrong, his head sometimes weak, and his hand unsteady, but his heart is always right.

But his attention to temporalities is too exclusive ; his vision magnifies near objects so that distant ones become obscure ; the glass of faith he does not often look through ; the deep waters he never treads ; he never enters the holy of holies ; he never brings down a sacred fire. Like the priests of Baal, who cut themselves with knives and cried aloud from morning until evening, he labors, but in vain. He preaches, but with

no unction ; he ministers, but with no effect. One is never moved by his discourses to anything more than a present or passing sympathy. A lofty influence, an exalted, pure, religious fervor, is entirely lacking in his sermons. Could he have satisfied the cravings of poor young Stirling ? Could he have silenced the doubts of Tennyson, or demolished the arguments of Carlyle ? A soul struggling for the light, wrestling with despair and anxiety, an "infant crying in the night," would find no solace, no answer, no light for the darkness, no ease for a troubled mind with him.

When will the preachers of this day learn how widespread is the doubt that disturbs the minds of educated men ? Not only is it diffused among those who avow themselves unbelievers, but among members of Christian churches, among those who seldom acknowledge their perplexity ; and stranger still, among those who appear immersed in business or pleasure, there are many who think earnestly, seriously, faithfully ; many who cannot be satisfied ; who determine not to think, to drown doubts in the whirl of excitement, but to whom these thoughts return in spite of themselves, to whom they cling like the old man of the mountain to Sinbad, which they cannot shake off. And yet preachers go lazily on, telling men and women that God is love, and will damn them all if they don't believe. While many, perhaps a majority of the leading literary minds of this and other countries are tinctured with free-thinking notions, no effort is made, or none commensurate with the need, to affect the age. Missionaries are sent to Boroboolah Gha, and a wail is made over the Five Points, but the mass of the educated people of the

country will be infidel before the preachers know it.

Dr. Chapin's style is second-rate. It is pretentious and tawdry, overloaded with ornament, crammed with fine words and far-fetched or commonplace figures, interlarded with witticisms, and stuck full of poetical quotations, which are recited in the worst theatrical manner. The arrangement is often faulty, the logic entirely wanting, and the really fine things are frequently so obtruded as to become offensive. If he thinks of anything clever, or can say anything cleverly, in it comes, though utterly irrelevant. There is a constant aim at effect, a constant straining for applause. The interest of his subject never so far absorbs him that he forgets himself; when he makes a good point, he stops and looks around, as if to cry "*Plaudite nunc!*" and a rustling is heard all over the house. He seldom fails of a certain effect; he produces in a promiscuous audience a kind of mental titillation, but never impresses one soberly or permanently. Though occasionally some strokes come home to every one, and some flights are actually successful, his eloquence is, on the whole, too sophomoreish to please either scholars or people of high cultivation. The chastening effect of ripe mental culture is everywhere lacking.

His earnest sympathy, his genial charity, his universal amiability, are traits that distinguish the man rather than the preacher or orator. His showy talents are the very ones to make him popular, just as the gaudy colors of a picture are sure to attract the uneducated eye, which the cultivated taste as surely rejects. The few effective things he says can no more redeem

his reputation as an orator, than the praiseworthy characteristics I have mentioned can make him a true preacher. You leave the house after listening to his discourses, thinking of the clever man, not of the absorbing theme ; you have seen a brilliant display of fireworks, perhaps, but the smell and the smoke remain, and the darkness of doubt is deeper than ever.

## NIBLO'S.

"The house is a respected house."

*Measure for Measure.*

NIBLO'S is to be abolished ; the time-honored "garden" must at last succumb before the march of trade ; the house so long respected in the memories of playgoers is hereafter to be respected in memory alone. On the first of May, the theatre must give way to the hotel. I am sorry. Some of my pleasantest recollections of the play-house are connected with Niblo's, as must be those of every aboriginal New Yorker. Since Vauxhall and the Park theatre disappeared, this has been the oldest theatrical landmark on the west side of the town ; in fact, the only one that has lasted half a generation ; the only one with any savor of age about it, or any halo of association. 'Twas the first place of amusement I ever visited. I recollect as well as if it were but yesterday how I sat in the parquet, in my plaid jacket and cap, and saw the green curtain, with the inexplicable tight-rope coming down over the footlights and the heads of the musicians. I remember vividly enough the loud music of the orchestra, and the impression of "something rich and strange" it made upon my baby ear ; indeed, I am not sure but that the recollection of the

music was, for long, more vivid than the memory of the spectacle that came after.

But oh! the wonderful fairy-land into which I was let when the curtain was first lifted before my eyes. Would you believe it, 'tis fairy-land yet, often and often to me, when the curtain is lifted. I have spent more happy hours in a theatre than I ever did out of it. I have known as keen enjoyment gazing upon the fairy world that lies beyond that curtain, as I have ever known away from its influences. Oh! when I think of the exquisite gratifications afforded me by the stage; when I remember the domain of the imagination all made real, the fancies embodied, the poetry incarnated in a theatre; when I recall the strains of delicious music, with all the delicate and subtle influences that music summons up—all the host of thoughts, and passions, and feelings, and fancies that are its slaves as the genius was of Aladdin—the rage of Norma and the witchery of Freischutz, the passion of Lucrezia and the intrigues of Seville; when I remember, too, the wit of merry Beatrice and the jealousy of dun Othello, the sublime agony of the ancient Phedre and the wretchedness of our modern Camille, the lofty sorrow of Lord Hamlet and the awful horror of Macbeth—all the mingled intellectual and sensual delights that I have received from the stage—can I ever forget my first night in a theatre?

That was the vestibule to the temple; the initiation to a whole realm of enjoyment. Grisi's wondrous tones and Sontag's delicate grace; Forrest's *Metamora*, Rachel's *Adrienne*, Heron's *Medea*, Wallack's *Don Cæsar*, Burton's *Dogberry*, young Booth's *Richard*, all these were ushered in by the delights of that evening. These,

a splendid company, stood waiting at the door of my brain that night, sure, when once they had entered, to be welcome visitants for ever. Little did the boy who clapped his tiny hands at Gabriel Ravel's feats, dream of the big crowd of after pleasures that were destined to follow on the heels of the tumbler. Little did those who took him to the play-house imagine that in all his youth and early manhood he could find no pleasures, either in study, or travel, or gayer life (and all of these he tried), that should rival those of the theatre; pleasures which study and travel and society fitted him the better to relish and appreciate: for indeed all books and all culture fit one the better to delight in the expression and illustration of the choicest literature; in the rendering of the most exquisite poetry; in the uttering of the greatest tragedies and comedies. All travel and all experience make one a fitter judge of the naturalness of acting, a better critic of those representations of life and passion, of those pictures of men and women in various climes and times and in the varied situations of the stage.

Do you wonder, then, that I look kindly back on Niblo's; that the house is to me a respected house; that I retain a distinct remembrance of the very play that was performed on that eventful night; that I recall the children dancers who since then have grown into men and women; that I like to summon up again the pantomime, and the clown, and the rope-dancing, and the balance-pole, and the glittering background, and the handsomely painted men and the bright-eyed women, and all the paraphernalia that dazzled my infant senses so that they have not yet recovered. There were fire-



works, too, in the garden : for there was a garden then ; and we went upon a piazza to look on, but these were not half so wonderful to me as the pageant within doors. I was ever more interested in humanity than in its surroundings, although I confess the surroundings have an influence on me. But my temperament is sympathetic. I am still more susceptible to the influences of passion than to those of taste. I preferred the plot of the serious pantomime within to the brilliant wheels and rockets out-of-doors ; and to-day I like people better than shows, and a play better than a spectacle.

After that night I was not soon let go again. I talked and dreamed of nothing but the theatre, and those who had charge of me were afraid I might get stage struck, I suppose, or crazy ; so I used to steal away at nightfall, and stand by the door of Niblo's to watch the people as they entered the wonderful palace of delights. I was so young that I dared not go in alone, but I formed an acquaintance with the doorkeeper, and told him that I once had been within the magic precincts. I assured him that when the Ravels returned I was to be taken thither again ; once in a season I might hope to penetrate the mysteries of Melpomene. I got a copy of Shakspeare, too, and carried it under my arm while I stood at the portals beyond which I might not pass ; and though I could scarcely have had the faintest idea of its beauties, I pored over the volume constantly at home, because it was a book of plays. There's another habit of which I am not yet cured.

Afterwards came children's theatricals, and all the early experience of Wilhelm Meister ; only as soon as I was at all able to appreciate good acting, my delight in

witnessing it was so great that I lost any desire to take part in the performance. I went occasionally to Niblo's till I was about thirteen, and then I ventured alone. My memories of the place since, are like those of other people, I suppose. Others, besides me, remember Albani, and Sontag, and Mowatt, and Cushman: others remember the most delicious singer in the world, as Orsini, on that night when Salvi and DeVries were in the cast of "Lucrezia Borgia," and Marini and Rocco sang in the chorus; that chorus so superbly given at the end of the first act, that the house nearly rose. I don't believe it has ever been as well sung in New York since. Others, besides me, remember Sontag in "Don Pasquale," as bewitching a Norina as Piccolomini was last week; Steffanoni too, storming so splendidly in the "Favorita," and Thillon, the fascinating *vivandière*. Then, later, there have been Mrs. Mowatt, and Burton, and Miss Cushman; Armand, and Mr. Toodles, and Lady Macbeth; and the dancers, the finest ballet people we have ever had in New York; the Sotos in their prime, the Roussets, and the Pougauds, and the Rollas.

I had a little adventure of my own when Mrs. Mowatt was at Niblo's. It was the last night of her stage life; the house was crowded to its utmost capacity with a fashionable audience, many of them personal friends of the lovely woman whose history all New Yorkers know; who has now gone back to grace the society that claimed her for one of its brightest ornaments ere the world at large knew of her talents or her charms. The throng was so great that I could find no place but the passage-way in the dress-circle, and there I sat on the floor. A fine grey-headed old man was on the sofa

next to me, and opened the conversation : remarked the immense concourse, and said it reminded him of the Theatre Français in the days of Talma. From the crowd to the actress was a ready transition ; so we fell to discussing Mrs. Mowatt. I said she was charming and clever, and wondered if her graces were natural or acquired. My acquaintance insisted that they were natural ; in fact, he knew they were so. Then I wondered if this were really her last appearance, and surmised that she would soon return to the stage. "No," said my friend, "she will be married in a month." I knew of that before, and told him the day ; but we did not agree about the date, and the fine old grey-headed gentleman thought he ought to know best, since "he was her father." Of course I admitted the probability of his being correctly informed, and apologized for the freedom of my criticisms ; he declared, however, that they had not been offensive, and even if they had proved unfavorable, that I was not to blame. But I could not remember having been very censorious, and we chatted away all the evening. I applauded very vigorously, as you may guess, and I remember going out to buy a bouquet. I was to be taken to the wedding, and thought I might as well secure a gracious reception. I went to the wedding along with two thousand other people, on a fine day in June, shortly after, and I was not the only one there who remembered Niblo's.

But the time would fail me to recall all my adventures at Niblo's. There I first went behind the scenes ; it was at a college commencement, and belles and beaux were flirting in the green-room and over the trap-doors where Mazulme, the night-owl, was wont to descend ;

benediction was repeated by the Chancellor right under the pulley that let down Pougaud; and the college dons sat erect and precise on the very spot where Soto's *pas* was most enchanting. There, too, I have been with sweethearts innumerable; I flirted only a week ago with half-a-dozen different pretty girls at a Philharmonic rehearsal, when I ought to have been listening to Schumann or Schubert; and I went one morning last week with a crowd of children to see the circus performances. I held a baby on my lap while Jack the Giant Killer performed his feats in the ring, and I had an adventure meanwhile quite as funny as the one with Mrs. Mowatt's father. This time I sat next a plain little woman not thirty years old, who, as I was reading the programme aloud to my charges, said to me proudly, "My husband plays the giant." After this advance on her part, our conversation became animated; my friend gave me abundant information regarding the horses and their riders; furnished me material enough to write a biography of Dan Rice and his horse, Excelsior; told how much salary each gets a week, and who was to play the giantess. When the tumblers came on she pointed out her husband, a tall, lank, sprightly fellow, and assured me he was all muscle and bone, every inch of him; and to be sure he did deeds of dreadful note; and as the giant appeared in the concluding spectacle, with a head bigger than a barrel, she exclaimed: "Now who'd think that was my John? I vow I wouldn't have knowed him!"

But, alas! all these days and nights at Niblo's are drawing to a close; no more operas nor pantomimes; no flirting behind the scenes nor in front; no philhar-

monic rehearsals nor circus *matinées*; no adventures with fashionable men or unfashionable women, with the parents of distinguished actresses or the wives of muscular gymnasts; the fashion of this world passeth away.

## FRENCH ART IN NEW YORK.

"Painting is Welcome."

*Timon of Athens.*

FRANCE is the fulcrum that Archimedes wanted: he who rests his lever there can move the world. For Paris sets the fashion in revolutions as well as in dress, stamps the reputation of a singer, or lights the torch that puts Europe in a blaze. French ideas are at the basis of all that is distinctive in modern civilization, in our philosophy, our art, and our life. Even England, prejudiced, selfish, introspective, is influenced by her lively, magnetic neighbor, and Punch acknowledges that Mr. Bull has to take his time from Napoleon, while the rest of trans-Atlantic Christendom openly follows in the wake of France. We, on this side of the ocean, are apt to think ourselves our own exemplar; but lookers-on tell how much New York is like a second Paris; how the life in public—the cafés, the showy streets, the gay population—reminds them more vividly of the Boulevards than of the Strand. And to go back to history, the truest democrats of '76 were men imbued with the spirit and notions of French philosophers. Many of the founders of this Union were indeed far from anticipating, or even desiring, the result which we witness. They preferred and worked to accomplish a sober, aristocratic form of government,

where people of family and condition should quietly assume the lead. But Jefferson established another school; a school which has completely and wonderfully triumphed, whose doctrines are now almost universally received; and those doctrines were learned at the feet of French Gamaliels. Voltaire and Rousseau first proclaimed the ideas from which has sprung our modern American republic.

Not only in philosophy, however, is that wonderful people in advance of the world; her civilization is the completest, her art the most carefully studied of our day. It is that art, in those of its manifestations which have been presented to the metropolis of America, that I wish now to discuss. French literature is sufficiently familiar to us. Unfortunately, its more unpleasant phases are most conspicuous; still, the best authors of modern France are widely read and thoroughly appreciated by cultivated Americans. We have also had opportunities of witnessing the culminating glories of the French theatre. We have seen Rachel, the incarnation of French art, we have studied the classic and romantic dramas as represented by their common queen; but it is neither the influence and character of the French stage, nor of French literature, but of French paintings, upon which I propose now to remark.

Fine paintings, master-pieces indeed of art, by great Frenchmen, have been at various times exhibited in New York. The productions of Horace Vernet, of Scheffer, and of De la Roche, have been submitted to our consideration. They obtained the notice of those who loved pictures, and were variously criticised in the journals of the day. I know not, however, that they have been

contemplated as indices to national character, as developments of national intellect. And yet the French mind is so alive to the influences of art, manifests itself so frequently through this medium, acknowledges the productions of art as fair illustrations of the national or individual character, that it seems fitting we should thus consider the specimens which have been in America. True, the American mind is, in the mass, as yet too material to submit to be judged in a similar manner. The artistic development of our character is not yet sufficient for us to consent that it should be taken as a type of ourselves; but we can at least consider others under forms which we have not assumed. It is fair to the French to contemplate them under this aspect.

The recent death of De la Roche of course recalls the productions of that master, three of whose greatest efforts are familiar to lovers and students of art in our midst. These are his "Napoleon Crossing the Alps," which is still in New York; his "Hemicycle of the Palace of Fine Arts;" and, greater than either, perhaps greater than any of his other works, "Marie Antoinette before the Revolutionary Tribunal." The pictures of his father-in-law, the great Vernet, are not unknown to us. Mr. Bryan has in his gallery a little work of Vernet's, entitled "Napoleon before the Battle of Waterloo;" and the Messrs. Goupil exhibited, not a great while ago, a brilliant picture of his, "The Brethren of Joseph." Of Scheffer's works it is only necessary to mention the "Dante and Beatrice," "The Temptation," "The Dead Christ," and the prints of "Christus Consolator" and "Remunerator." These three great masters are sufficiently individualized, and at the



same time sufficiently marked in their nationality, to represent not unworthily three important phases of French art. I have no scruple in reckoning Scheffer among French artists; for though by birth a Belgian, his studies and tastes are essentially French, and his works as emphatically so as those of any of his contemporaries.

Some years ago the French seemed to have passed the era when genius culminates. The critical epoch had arrived with them; the six days of creation were over, and the Sabbath of rest was begun. They were occupied in perfecting their taste, in elaborating their skill, in polishing their marble, and carving their stone: they no longer cut out Apollos, or built Notre Dames. The classic taste of Racine, and the Alexandrines of Corneille, reigned supreme on their stage. Even in enunciating truths and doctrines of the most astounding import to mankind, the Des Cartes and Voltaires stopped to polish their epigrams and chasten their style. But the whirlwind of the revolution has evoked other geniuses. On the stage, the romantic school now contends with the classic; in literature, the burning eloquence of Madame Dudevant, and the intensity of modern fiction, have supplanted the calm wit and delicate satire of La Bruyère and De Sévigné. Something of the same sort may be seen in art, the same struggle in another field. Ary Scheffer's studied attitudes and elaborate grace, his coldness and sentimentality, are counterparts of the ancient regime; the gay brilliancy and theatrical exaggeration of Vernet ally him to the present century as well as to the past; but the profound significance, the intense feeling, the passionate expression of De la Roche, make him the exponent of revolutionary France.

I confess these things do not speak so plainly from the canvas as from the printed page or from the theatre. The national mind of France has not been particularly directed to painting. No such outburst of intellect and genius is there apparent as in the Italian school, or the Flemish even, as in the statues of Greece, or the architecture of the middle ages. Still, he who looks close may find a meaning even in the comparatively meaningless pictures of France.

Scheffer I cannot admire. His tameness and his elegance according to rule, remind me of Watteau and the three unities of Racine. Not all his tenderness and occasional sweetness, not even the dignity of some compositions, and the religious calm of others, compensate for the frigid, stilted air which pervades them all—for the absence of deep feeling, for the lack of inspiration, which I remark in all his works. In the mild, insipid countenance of the Christ of "The Temptation," for instance, or the very unimpassioned Dante of his more famous work, I can discover no trace of genius. Carefully cultivated talent, correct taste, real learning, but no feeling, no soul, no genius. He is, I think, the type of the worst phase of French art. A dead Christ, indeed, he paints; but let him attempt no living one. No light burns in the eyes of his faces, and no life animates his figures. A chill strikes you on looking at them, like that you feel on entering a vault. He is the Della Cruscan painter of France—the Pope, or rather the Cowley, of French art. Two mites once outweighed a treasury, and two strokes of the pencil of genius are worth a Louvre full of Scheffer's paintings.

Vernet's best works have never been in America; but

a tolerable estimate of his ability can be formed from those which have. He holds a middle place between the cold statue of Scheffer and the inspired man of De la Roche. He paints out-door life, the sun of the tropics, the sands of Africa, the gay colors and fiery chargers of war; the armies of Napoleon, but not Napoleon himself; the smoke and the carnage of battle, but not its poetry; the Arabs of the desert, but no individual man. A confirmed realist, a Dumas in painting, brilliant, gorgeous, truthful in outsides, but never penetrating beneath them; excellent as far as he goes, having a mission, and doing it well; having a talent, and not hiding it in a napkin; singing his song, painting his picture, but no more trenching upon the province of the great artist than the grasshopper does upon that of the nightingale—than the faun half divine, can be said to assume the thunderbolts of Jupiter.

Paul de la Roche is the greatest of all French painters. He only, or he best seems penetrated with the spirit of the wonderful age in which we live. He feels all its actuality and all its ideality, for it indeed combines the two; intensely material, but finding more poetry in matter than ever was dreamed of in spirit. De la Roche loves outward nature, appreciates beauty of form and figure, but knows that the highest beauty of face is that of the soul limned in feature. His pictures are learned in art, are studies in drawing and color, have beauties enough for the eye of the connoisseur; but more than all this, they speak to the heart of the man. The face of his Napoleon, full of genius, of character, of life; the compression into eye and mouth of such a world of meaning, of a lifetime of history, is wonderful.

Look into that face, and see Marengo and Egypt, empire and destiny. Then, for an example of touching tenderness, of queenly dignity, and womanly fortitude, the countenance of his Marie Antoinette is almost unparalleled. Tears start unbidden to one's eyes upon looking at this great picture. The hair, blanched by sorrow, the heavy eyelids, the proud, yet quivering mouth, and the form stately in misfortune—all these are inimitable. His selection of subjects, as well as their handling, proves the master's mind susceptible, shows the reflex of events, the influence of the age. In his works are imaged the wild republican fury and the love of military glory, the two passions which distract France. Here is mirrored the unrest that throbs in George Sand, and is uttered by Meyerbeer and Victor Hugo. Here is the truest exposition on canvas of the Marseillaise, as Rachel sang it during the days of February. Here we find another voice for the spirit that has overturned thrones and dynasties; that has shaken Europe again and again to its centre; that volcano of thought and feeling which ever and anon belches out yet another eruption to overwhelm more than another Pompeii. De la Roche is modern France.

## EDWIN FORREST.

"I can't acquit by wholesale, nor condemn."

CHURCHILL'S *Rosciad*.

ROSCIUS had a defect in his eye, and Churchill found fault with Garrick; but Cicero studied oratory with Roscius for all his squint, and Churchill finished his lines by declaring :

"Hence to thy praises, Garrick, I agree,

And pleased with Nature, must be pleased with thee."

Mr. Forrest may or may not be a Roscius or a Garrick; we, who see him, can know of the others only by tradition; but we do know that the great masters and models of the stage were not without faults and fault-finders; so we need not be surprised if there be those who refuse any praise to one of the first tragedians of our day, nor even if there exist some reason for the refusal.

I call Mr. Forrest one of the first tragedians of our day. I know it is the fashion to decry him; I know that his audiences, though large, are not generally composed of cultivated people; but they are sometimes as good judges of acting as the scholars and thinkers who affect to despise them. No acting is great which does

not please more than a class. That which is addressed to, and intended solely for a few, lacks the truest constituent of greatness, universality. Any work of literature or art, of poetry or oratory, as well as the drama, must, to produce the finest effect, appeal to the passions, or the feelings as well as the taste; and passion brings men to a common level. The profoundest scholar, the most accomplished man of the world, loves and hates, fears and exults, just as the Bowery boy, or the plebeian of old Rome. When passion arrives at a climax, its manifestation is pretty much the same in all classes, and the gods of the gallery are as good critics of the great points in a performance as the wits and blues of the boxes. Because then, Mr. Forrest has triumphed only or mostly over audiences not "in society," he has triumphed none the less triumphantly.

Neither is he altogether limited in this regard. Many a straggler from the high places of fashion finds his way into the Broadway; and here and there you will meet an admirer of his, willing to do battle in a good cause, though against fearful odds. The fair sex especially would be glad to return to their allegiance; for the time has been when it was the fashion to admire Forrest; when it was in good taste to take seats for his benefit, and highly respectable to applaud him in *Metamora*, or to cry over his *Damon*. The present rage for staying away came in, as everybody knows, when Macready went out. Mr. Forrest offended the fashionable world, and it has pouted ever since. Then he subsequently flung his gauntlet in the face of the literary world, which has never forgiven him. But these quarrels don't affect his acting. His merits are as conspicuous now as before

the Astor-Place riots, and his faults are no more glaring than when up-town crowded to see him as eagerly as down-town does now. Nobody disliked some points in Mr. Forrest's conduct more than the Vagabond, but I can do justice to his great talents for all that. In fact, I cannot altogether debar myself the pleasure of witnessing his personations.

What especially I find to admire in Mr. Forrest is his power to move me. He has great faults; he rants undoubtedly; he roars and bellows at times in the most unpleasant manner; he conceives some parts very differently from my idea of them; and I never see him without disapproving of many things that he does. But I never see him without confessing his ability. He possesses the true dramatic talent—the power to make you weep and shudder at his will. He himself feels what he represents. He is mindful of the old Roman's maxim:

*“Si vis me flere, dolendum est  
Primum tibi.”*

He is for awhile Damon, or Cade, or Spartacus. He forgets himself, and you forget him too. His humanity excites your sympathy, his passion strikes an answering chord in your breast, he moves you.

Others may give a picture more critically exact, may read with more of the elocutionist's skill, may even dissect a part with a truer philosophy; but few will grasp more certainly the prominent features of a character, or give them half the expression, half the earnestness, the likeness, the reality that he does.

I was particularly struck with this of late. Hamlet

has been played by several fine actors within a few months. It is especially an intellectual *rôle*—one which they say Mr. Forrest has no conception of, which he is utterly unfit for, and unable to render. I saw Mr. Wallack, Mr. Davenport and Mr. Forrest play the part within a short while of each other. Mr. Wallack was a rhetorician, an actor. He read beautifully, he threw himself into graceful attitudes, he convinced you that he was an accomplished scholar and a gentleman; but he never evoked one spark of sympathy with the great creation of Shakspeare, he never let you forget Mr. Wallack, he never identified himself with the part. Mr. Davenport played in a gentlemanly, quiet style, with much less elegance than Wallack, and much more feeling. I regard his performance as decidedly the superior of the two. It showed deeper thought, it was less stagey and tricky, more manly and natural; but still it was tame, and at times uninteresting. It never once excited any real emotion in the audience; it never made us feel. Mr. Forrest's personation, however, was full of life and spirit. It may not have answered exactly the idea of an intellectual man; it may not have been sufficiently refined, sufficiently subtile, sufficiently elaborate; but I could not see it without emotion. I could not witness his interview with the ghost, without terror, or listen unmoved to his appeals to a guilty mother. I could not watch him during the intense interest of the mimic play, and finally observe his terrific joy at the climax, without confessing his genius. In what is universal, human, sympathetic, Mr. Forrest excels.

His art is not equal to that of some; but all the art in the world could not produce the effect of his wild



rush upon the stage, panting, eager, full of rage, in the last scene of *Damon*. Your carefully-modelled men, your elocutionists and rhetoricians, could never rival his few simple touches of pathos in *Metamora*, at the death of his child. One or two words suffice to set a whole house in tears.

This reminds me that Mr. Forrest is really and truly greatest in his quieter acting. The horror of his death scenes, the physical contortions which excite so much disgust, display only a curious talent that he possesses, are indeed unnatural and monstrous. The rant in which he frequently indulges, especially in declamatory rôles, is overdone and fails of its effect; but his play in some tender scene, some little bit of domestic fondling, some gentle adieu to a friend, has frequently unmanned many a stern admirer. It is common, I know, to say that Mr. Forrest cannot do such things well, that he cannot play tenderly; but I think this a mistake. Who that recollects the parting with his wife in "*Damon and Pythias*," or the family scene in the "*Gladiator*," but will admit his possession of this excellence.

His tones, too, when restrained, affect me more than in the very whirlwind of passion. They seem then brimful of pent-up feeling, which is always more awful than these gusts of unrestrained rage. Some hurried sentence, some half-suppressed exclamation, has oftentimes more meaning than a world of violence. A quiet tone may speak volumes, when tearing the passion to tatters, though it split the ears of the groundlings, comes not near their hearts.

Mr. Forrest's physical qualifications are peculiar. His form is massive and well-developed; though almost

gigantic, its proportions are preserved. His appearance is always imposing, and has frequently a barbaric majesty, suitable to the parts he most often plays. A certain dignity of demeanor is generally maintained, though it must be remarked that this is utterly lost in the fiercest fits of Jack Cade and Metamora. His face is eminently expressive of the harsher emotions, and can certainly assume the most horrid aspect of any human countenance I ever gazed upon. He apparently possesses the power of foaming at the mouth, can swell the veins and muscles of his head and neck at will, call the blood to his temples, perspire, laugh, cry, just as he lists. His face can also at times express a vast deal of rough tenderness, all the more touching from the sterner guise it generally wears.

His voice is tremendous in power, but not remarkable for compass. It descends to a most cavernous and guttural or subter-guttural bass, but contains no shrill or tenor notes in its register. Still, he can modulate it with skill and effect. It is at times terrible, and at times touching. His growls rival those of the hyena in hideousness, and resemble them in roughness; his bursts of passion never fail for lack of force, and are often inexpressibly fine. He can give vent to all the sterner emotions without words. Of inarticulate sounds he has a whole vocabulary at his command; one, too, understood by all.

He has studied, too; but rather the execution than the conception of his parts. He is not an intellectual player; he is rough, he is coarse, but withal he is great, he is human. Shall we, then, because of his faults, debar ourselves from witnessing his excellences? Says Horace:

"Ille poeta qui pectus inanitus angit,  
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet."

According to this rule, Forrest has the true poetic fire, the real inspiration of genius—that rarest of gifts. Any of us can acquire scholarship: genius never is acquired. A Wallack is the product of the schools: a Forrest is never made. But he is adopted by the million; he is the pet of the masses; and those who belong to the ten thousand will not admire him.

"So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng  
By chance go right, they purposely go wrong."

## LA GRANGE.

"Nightly she sings."

*Romeo and Juliet.*

LA GRANGE is an artist in the best sense of the word ; she is devoted to her art. None of the lyric queens who at different times have visited America ever equalled her in this respect. Her own fame, and what to a woman is more, her own appearance, are always made secondary to the interests of music. Thus, she often sings a part manifestly and utterly unsuited to her ability, because, if she refused, the opera could not be given. Thus, she plays in "La Spia," where her person is entirely disguised, and sacrifices her looks in "Le Prophète," so that the most ardent admirer cannot extol her charms. Thus, for the sake of a new composer, or a new artist, she is always ready to become less prominent before the public. True, her gauge has been taken, her name is made, her position is ascertained and appreciated ; she can lose nothing in reality by this obliging spirit ; but, nevertheless, prima donnas are notoriously the most capricious and exacting, the vainest of God's creatures ; and when one of this most petted and most spoiled class possesses some of the worthiest and noblest attributes of woman, and manifests them in her art, it is a wonder worth chronicling.

This utter abnegation of self is rare among any, among all artists. Heart-burnings and squabbles are common in schools of painting and in cliques of *litterateurs*, and disgrace people of talent all the world over ; but especially is this true of musicians. Have we, New Yorkers, not had sad experience of their trifling vanities and ridiculous rivalries ? Does not the cause of music languish because of the soprano's whims and the contralto's spite ? because the tenor quarrels with the bass, and the orchestra is not of the same politics with the chorus ? All honor, then, to La Grange, who is absolutely religious in her devotion to art ! I really consider the dedication of all her faculties and time to this one purpose as approaching the heroic. She has done more to elevate art and its consideration among Americans, than any artist who has ever visited us. She has shown us that it may be made the object of a lifetime ; that its professors may be pure, and lovely, and of good report ; that they may be people of education, and taste, and breeding. She exemplifies the refining and exalting influence that the prosecution of such studies should have. She makes us recognise the legitimate object and effect of art. She realizes the desire and belief of great European writers and thinkers, who ascribe to art an influence over life, a real and tangible influence, extending beyond emotions to purposes and deeds.

But apart from the general character of this fine artist, she has individual and particular traits to be discussed. And first of all is her earnestness ; a faculty of throwing all her energies into the work in hand. Whether she sings in "Guillaume Tell" an entirely secondary part, or in "Norma," where nearly the

whole opera falls to her share, 'tis all the same. Whether she is subordinate to the composer, or assists at the *début* of a second-rate contralto or a spunky tenor, she shows the same alacrity to aid another, the same anxiety to do well whatsoever her hands find to do. Her talent is manifest, however, in this: others might be as desirous as she to do well, and yet not succeed. Now it is impossible to hear La Grange in anything and not receive some pleasure. The sparkling brilliancy of Rossini, the magnificent pathos of Meyerbeer, and the eternal freshness of Mozart, are all delightfully rendered. To be sure, she, as every one else, has her specialties. There are different degrees of success meted out to her in different *rôles*. Her Lucia is admirable, but her Norma to me is painful; however, she always does her best, and always affords some pleasure. Versatility is a remarkable peculiarity of her talent. I have heard her in every opera she has sung in America, from the "Barber of Seville," at Niblo's, where she first exhibited her marvellous powers of vocalization to an American audience, to the "Trovatore" of last week, in which she has performed perhaps forty times at the Academy. Nothing could possibly be greater than the difference in style and method between Verdi and Rossini, between "Il Barbiere" and "Il Trovatore"—the one elaborate and finished, exquisite in ornament and delicious in melody; the other, dramatic, wild, passionate. Rosina is arch and captivating, Leonora always sad and splendid; yet I know not in which La Grange excels. In the one, her great dramatic talent is displayed; in the other, her marvellous execution; in both, her fidelity to the spirit of the composer.

This leads me to speak of her great powers of interpretation. It is these which make her more than a vocalist, which elevate her to the rank of a great lyric artist. Music, and especially opera, is more than sweet sounds; it is the expression of the subtlest and loftiest sentiment, the rendering of the profoundest and intensest passion. More completely than painting or even poetry, does it catch and cage the most refined emotions of the human soul: it gives an utterance to the innermost yearnings of our nature, and wreaks upon expression the most terrific outbursts of feeling of which we are capable. It is one thing to sing mechanically the notes of a composer; it is quite another and different matter to understand and appreciate, to embody the meaning of a great soul like Beethoven or Mozart; it needs a sympathizing greatness in the artist to translate Meyerbeer. One must seize the thought of the master, one must feel it in all its depth and force, before he can interpret it to the hearer. This La Grange does. Other great singers have the passion that makes them feel Italian music, but are capable of nothing more or else. La Grange is not of an enthusiastic nature, and for that reason does not sing *Norma* or *Lucrezia* as Grisi did, but she makes music, such as the composer intended; she interprets the feeling or the thought that prompted every note; so her greatness is really more apparent in an opera that contains more than passion. New Yorkers like only music that expresses passion. The stormy interest of Verdi, the dramatic splendor of Donizetti, and the tender sweetness of Bellini, only are appreciated. But though these are great, they are not all. The wild unearthly grotesqueness of Von Weber, the charm

of Mozart, and the splendid science of Meyerbeer are equally worthy of study. And all these La Grange expresses worthily.

I think her essentially French in feeling and in her art. She frequently reminds me of Rachel, and in many things is not unworthy of a comparison with that magnificent and marvellous artist. Neither has one of those passionate, impulsive natures like Ristori or Siddons, who feel their parts so intensely. Mrs. Siddons was said to sob for an hour after playing one of her great characters, and Talma had to be wrapped in a cloak and carried from the theatre. Rachel and La Grange are never carried away by a divine enthusiasm, never forget themselves, always know what they are about and do it. Nobody admires Rachel more than I; none was more alive to the beauties of her acting, more keenly susceptible to its effects. I have shuddered at the death scene of Adrienne, and been unwilling to speak for an hour after witnessing Camille. I have been awe-struck by the transformation of Pauline, and the "*J'aime!*" of Phédre still rings in my ears; and yet I think Rachel has no genius. It was talent as marvellous as any genius; it was art such as I believe the world never saw before; but it was art.

So is it in some degree with La Grange. She has not attained (who but Rachel can attain?) that prodigious power of representing passion. She gives an entire character admirably; better than the passionate Steffanones and Parodis; but when the intense moment comes, she lacks the *élan*. Her Norma and her Lucrezia never move me; I admire only. Her Semiramide makes me regret Grisi. Only twice have I known her seem



inspired: in the last act of "Ernani," when she snatches the dagger from the hand of Gomez, and cries out in an agony of terror; and in the coronation scene of "Le Prophète" her entire acting and singing are electric. But her Norma is cold; the effort to work herself up is tremendous, but apparent; the effect is wonderful with her means, but the means are inadequate; she is physically incapable of doing or looking the part. So in "Semiramide." She sings the florid music incomparably, but the grand scenes are unequal; you feel that it is acting; you remember the royal dignity and magnificent horror of Grisi, and La Grange is tame by comparison. Again, I say, in the general and complete representation of character, La Grange is fine, is great; but at the tremendous moments of the grandest parts she fails. From this remark must ever be excepted her Fidès. The part I regard as equal in grandeur of conception to any on the lyric stage; and La Grange's rendering is quite equal to the composer's idea. The intensity here is, however, of another sort from that of "Norma" or "La Favorita." Yet one scene equals anything in those operas, and the music of the "*Ah, mon fils*" is sublime. I don't wonder that Meyerbeer would not allow the opera to be performed until La Grange could be engaged to sing it. I was at the Academy last winter, with some friends who cared not for music, and ridiculed my rhapsodies. They laughed and talked through half the opera; but the first notes of the "*Ah, mon fils*," hushed them, and when I turned round at its close, they were in tears.

It is time, however, for me to speak more particularly of her singing. This has been so often and so admira-

bly discussed that the attempt will be almost a work of supererogation in me. Nature has not gifted her so lavishly as she has many of the great queens of song; La Grange has no wonderful sweetness of voice, no marvellous volume, and I have even fancied that she sometimes sang sharp. Neither is her voice at all sympathetic. It is, however, flexible in an extraordinary degree, and for compass absolutely unsurpassed. It is a *mezzo soprano* of very delicate quality, somewhat worn, but clear as a bird's. For cultivation, it is unequalled in the world; certainly no artist living can compete with La Grange in execution. Her facility in the performance of musical difficulties is little less than miraculous, and stamps her unrivalled. Several songs, written expressly for her, would puzzle any prima donna in Europe—even Bosio or Cruvelli, probably the most finished singers living, after La Grange. Thus the same qualities are apparent in her vocalism as in her acting; the same perfection of manner and method, the same scrupulous attention to minutiae, the same exquisite taste, the same feeling for her art.

It seems almost superfluous to speak of La Grange's taste in dressing, which is at once correct, scrupulous, and superb; witness Linda, Fidès, and Lucia. Her manners are those of a refined gentlewoman. Her attention to stage business, her graceful and modest reception of applause, her undeviating fidelity to her engagements, are all known to New York, and appreciated. No artist was ever more beloved, none ever earned her laurels more fairly, or wore them more gracefully.

## “THE WORLD’S OWN.”

“The play’s the thing.”

*Hamlet.*

“LEONORE, or the World’s Own ;” is a tragedy in five acts, by Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, of which the plot is as follows: An Italian peasant girl, guiltily in love with a stranger nobleman, is deserted by him, but follows and finds him with his wife and child; she is repulsed cruelly and coarsely, and devotes her life to revenge. To accomplish this, she becomes the mistress of her sovereign, plots and obtains her lover’s ruin, and finally, glutted with vengeance, is overcome with remorse, and kills herself.

This production has been the target of much bitter criticism and unmerited censure. It has been called immoral in tendency, unnatural and improbable in plot and incident, monstrous in character, and utterly uninteresting. Yet it is the fruit of long and laborious effort by a fine mind, had been subjected previous to its performance to some of the best cultured intellects of the country, and to some of those best calculated to judge of its fitness for the stage. It is to be presumed that the objections which are now alleged against it, if they have any foundation, were at least considered before it was presented to the public.

“The World’s Own” is pronounced by some immoral,

because its story is one of seduction, because the heroine is a murderess and the mistress of a prince. But if the wrongs of woman and her revenge are to be excluded from the drama, a new canon of criticism must be invented to accomplish it. The same strictures can be applied to the masterpieces of literature in every age and country. Lady Macbeth is a hideous portraiture in some respects, and quite as unnatural in her wickedness as Leonore; Cleopatra is as voluptuous, Beatrice di Cenci as revengeful as Mrs. Howe's heroine. The great tragedies of antiquity, which have for three thousand years extorted the admiration and enlisted the sympathies of the learned, turn on plots as objectionable as this of "The World's Own:" represent passions quite as fierce and implacable. What is the theme of "Phædra," of the "Medea," either of Euripides or of Seneca; or in modern literature, of the "Myrrha" of Alfieri, the "Andromaque" of Racine, or the "Angelo" of Victor Hugo, but the story of spurned and injured women, of infuriated, erring, exceptional beings? The greatest poems and plays in every literature must be tabooed, if dramatists are debarred from selecting topics that treat of crime. Besides, the tragic stage only aims at representing passion; it does not hold up its portraitures as worthy of imitation. Mrs. Howe does not offer Leonore as a model for the women who witness her play; she gives a superb creation; a truthful representation of the fury of an Italian woman, no more immoral than a picture of the Crucifixion is immoral because it represents wickedness triumphant, or than the description of Satan in "Paradise Lost."

As to naturalness and improbability, if Mrs. Howe

sins here, she sins again in good company. The same names already mentioned might be adduced again in her support; the poets who invented the horrid stories that have always been favorites on both the ancient and modern stage, that are the staple of the classic and the romantic drama, are in the same category. Is "The World's Own" more improbable than "Lear," or more unnatural than "Othello?" Will it compare in these respects with the "Wallenstein" of Schiller, or the "Remorse" of Coleridge, with the heaped up impossibilities of the Elizabethan dramatists, or the inventions of Scribe in the modern French theatre? Yet all these works are pronounced admirable in their degree; many of them, and those the most unlike ordinary life, not only retain possession of the stage, but invariably attract crowded audiences. The truth is, this new play is no more of a sensation-piece than any great tragedy that ever was written. Is it supposed that men now for the first time weep or shudder over intense scenes or harrowing pages? The crowds that filled the Grecian amphitheatre when the dramas of Æschylus were performed, were quite as eager as those that throng Wallack's boxes and parquet. Children died of fright, women miscarried, and whole audiences were subdued at the representation of Clytemnestra and Orestes—sensation-characters, which doubtless were decried in the circles of Athens as too intense, as unnatural and immoral.

If the portraiture of passion is immoral; if the display of its effects is improper; if the selection of events such as history is filled with; if the development of characters like Lucretia Borgia, like Catharine de Medicis or Semiramis, is unnatural; if the working-

out of a plot as truthful as the stories of Messalina, of Charlotte Corday, of Catharine of Russia, of Olympe de Gournes, of Mrs. Cunningham, of Polly Bodine, is improbable and unnatural, then "The World's Own" is improbable, is unnatural, is immoral. But censure that applies to Mrs. Howe must reach the drama itself; if she is wrong, the stage is wrong; human nature is untrue to itself; its tastes have never been correct; genius has always been distorted; plays have always been written to pander to a vicious tendency; the inclination implanted by the Creator in us all to delight in the theatre is also wrong; the poets, the artists, the dramatists of all ages and countries have erred in portraying highly wrought scenes; the whole race that has admired their productions is to be blamed.

Faults the play has, like all human productions; unity is lacking, incidents are intruded which certainly might have been omitted, characters come and go that at least delay the development of the plot. Some of the ideas, especially towards the conclusion, are not new, or fine; the gipsy, the secret tribunal, and the child stealing, though they furnish occasions for much good writing, contribute not materially to the progress of the story; but how many such faults may be found even in the dramas of him who might have blotted a thousand lines with justice, and yet whom we would not wish to have blotted one. The action of every one of Shakspeare's plays is obstructed by scenes and characters that no one would be willing to lose. How does Mercutio assist in the development of "Romeo and Juliet?" How does the advice to the players in "Hamlet" contribute to the discovery of Gertrude's guilt? If "The World's Own"

is to be judged by the rules of the French stage, everything to be eliminated that does not manifestly aid the progress of the piece, there are portions which need emendation. And I confess I like the French doctrine when applied to new writers. Those who have now to make our plays may as well conform to these rules; may as well introduce no extraneous matter for representation at least. What is suitable for the closet, what may there afford exquisite delight, is often absolutely unwelcome on the stage. In this light, then, the "The World's Own" lacks the requisite unity in the concluding part.

But there are other matters worthy of commendation: the situations are some of them surpassingly fine; the meeting of Leonore with her betrayer and his wife and child is admirably managed, is most effective on the stage, and gives occasion for some nervous writing. The jeering of the peasant companions is also fine, and reminds me of the railing at Gretchen, in "Faust;" yet is not sufficiently like to suggest the charge of plagiarism. The scene between Leonore and the prince is masterly both in conception and treatment; and though we may deny the merit of naturalness to the masked interview, it is impossible not to acknowledge its effectiveness in a dramatic light.

In characters strongly marked and interesting, the new play is deficient. Lothair is common-place; Edward almost insipid; the wife not sufficiently prominent to awaken much feeling, although the sketch is carefully drawn; as is also that of the malignant little peasant in the second act. But there is character enough in Leonore herself; and I am not so sure but that it is better thus to concentrate the interest in one, than to scatter

it upon a dozen. Certainly when we are to have a woman of surpassing genius to play the heroine, I prefer to be absorbed in her. Leonore is a great creation: it is original, it is slowly developed, assumes many phases, but under each retains the distinctive features—the Italian passion, whether manifested in love or hate, the intensity whether of remorse or anxiety, the same fierce soul beaming out in the raptures of the first act, or the sardonic exultation of the fourth. I regard the character of Leonore a triumph, and as such sufficient alone to stamp the play. The delicious lover of the opening scenes; the startled girl waking from her dream to the realities of desertion and ignominy, the woman eager as Evangeline after Gabriel, but metamorphosed into a fiend when she is spurned; the terrific portraiture of the prince's mistress, and the proud Até-like creature of the close, the very goddess of evil, fallen yet unmoved, till recollections of early purity are evoked, and then the stormy remorseful woman—surely these constitute a great character, a great work of art.

The language is throughout the play exquisitely felicitous; the rhythm melodic and constantly preserved; the images charming, and sometimes spirited; the dialogue flows easily. The diction is not, however, except in the language of Leonore, individualized or characteristic: it is everywhere the poet's, not Helen's, or Lothair's, or Edward's, and only occasionally does it rise to nervousness; only here and there is the real language of passion employed, that terse intensity used in real life when the feelings are excited. The use of imagery in passionate scenes is too profuse; for instance, in the last act, there is some charming poetry entirely misplaced; no Leo-



nore, in the situation represented, would stop to utter those exquisite thoughts. Feeling, too, is often described when it should be expressed; still, this commonest of faults in dramatic writers is rare in "The World's Own" by comparison with others. Although, then, I see more blemishes in the language (but only in its lack of fitness, not in the language itself) than in any other feature of the piece, the author is still far beyond most playwrights in this very respect. Frequently the words are full of emotion.

When Lamartine was a young and eager poet, he took a play to Talma, who considered it carefully and thoughtfully, and finally exclaimed: "Writing for the stage may be either tragedy, poetry, or the drama—Corneille, Racine, Shakspeare; but the drama bears the palm; the drama is natural, the others artistic. I have become what I am by following nature rather than art, by studying Shakspeare rather than the French writers." This remarkable admission from the greatest of all French actors, is an epitome of criticism. Tragedy is the stilted style in which the ancients delighted, which is indeed awful, impressive, and sublime; which even contains a fire and spirit that occasionally startle us, as in the "Cid" of Corneille or the "Hippolytus Stephano-phorus" of Euripides. Poetry (for the stage) is the exquisite description of events, combined with ornaments of figure and language, with the music of words, and the delicate graces of thought: like the flow of Racine, or the fancy of Addison, but cold and unimpassioned for all its beauty. The Shakspearean, romantic drama, alone represents life, nature, humanity. This speaks right home to every heart; this is what we imperiously

demand upon the stage. All else is impertinent, and ineffective by comparison. Poetry has no business in the theatre at all; it is meant for the closet, for reading, not for acting. The true classic tragedy is different. I should be sorry to have it banished from the stage; but it needs superlative histrionic genius to make it endurable; and even then, in absolute power it must yield to the drama, of which, of course, Shakspeare is king—unapproachable and alone. Still, others may attempt what only he could achieve; they may wander round the sides of that Parnassus on whose summit he sits serene.

Applying this test to "The World's Own," it must be pronounced unequal; with striking beauties it also has striking faults; it cannot be reckoned a complete drama, because of its great lack of unity, and the infusion, or intrusion rather, of poetic sentiment; and yet it is much more than a poem. Its passion, its one great character, its dramatic situations give it a claim to another title. In the closet it will bear closer study; you will there be willing to spare no splendid sentiment or expression. Enjoy it there as it first came from the woman's heart; her truest offspring, for it is all her own.

## THE AMATEURS.

“Will my daughter prove a good musician?”

*Timon of Athens.*

SOME of the amateurs are amateurs no longer; some have gone to Constantinople and some to convents; some have renounced all further publicity, and one is a prima donna. The rage for amateur performances has culminated in the *débat* of Mrs. de Wilhorst, and we may now expect to witness a subsidence. The papas will be frightened at the result which in one instance has followed upon these musical pastimes; and even the charmers charming never so wisely, will shrink from the prospect of such a finale as the stage! What rich father, indeed, wouldn't be frightened at the veracious history which is vouched for by all the belles in town? Listen, ye fathers with singing daughters!

A handsome tenor captivates the fancy of a young heiress, and demands her hand; whereupon papa informs him that there is no objection to the person or character of Almoviva, but a decided prejudice against his occupation. Tenor then very obligingly offers to relinquish his position, and deprive all the infatuated fair ones of an opportunity to hear him at St. Stephen's or the opera, if papa will settle two hundred thousand dollars upon his daughter. The very handsome propo-

sition is respectfully declined; then, gossip declares (how truly, who can say?) that he, so used to romantic adventures on the stage, endeavors to get up one off. An elopement is planned, but just as Norina is making off with Almoviva, in comes old Bartolo; and the dénouement is altogether different from that set down in the libretto, but quite as comic. Other stories have sadder endings. *N'en parlons plus.*

In the course of my vagabondage within the last—I shan't say how many—years, I have wandered into churches and parlors innumerable, opera-boxes and choirs, *coulisses* and vestries. To all I have the open sesame, and everywhere the worship of Euterpe is celebrated. Newport is as musical as the Fifth avenue: Catholic priests and Baptist preachers alike bow at the shrine of St. Cecilia. Those in the innermost penetralia of society are afflicted by the same vertigo which whirls still faster the circles of the outside courts. So long ago as when the Astor Place opera-house was flourishing, young ladies were sent to convents because they would fall in love with tenors, and Mr. Willis had to exclude artists from society. (*Vide* Home Journal, de Maretzek.)

In the course of time, the Academy was opened, and after Grisi and Mario had gone home disappointed, and Mirate unappreciated, Brignoli, who sings through his nose, took the town by storm. He and his fat friend, who needed not Patania to caricature him, were invited everywhere. First, they sang at private parties with young ladies who had good voices, and the young ladies of course went to the opera on benefit nights. So Amodio and Brignoli were

the rage. All sorts of funny and piquant stories were current about their triumphs and escapades. If Amodio entered a room, everybody was expected to get out of his way ; and I heard a lady say to her daughter, when the tenor was presented: "Rise, my dear, 'tis Mr. Brignoli !" About this time, it was the fashion to go to vespers either at St. Stephen's or at St. Francis de Xavier's; so the opera singers must perform there; and occasionally a programme was issued at Grace church to celebrate the *début* of a new performer, or the passion of our Lord.

By degrees, the belles who had voices began to cultivate them. They had the same masters who taught the tenors; they discovered that they could sing as well as Vestvali, or, at least, as Ventaldi; they tried "*Stride la Vampa*" and "*Tacea la Notte*," and rather liked the effect. At receptions they were applauded: morning visits happened on the days when they took lessons, and were converted into charming occasions. By and by, their progress becoming considerable, it was determined to give a charity concert, at which, of course, no names should be announced, and the performers were to sing behind a screen. The tickets were sold only to friends, and not to be had at all in the shops. This was extremely agreeable, and exclusive and charitable. The benevolent songstresses were listened to respectfully, and afterwards complimented; but no vulgar applause was allowed in the churches. However, the importance of the aforementioned opera singers was magnified by this new fantasy. Few men in society can sing. There is one young person who takes his notes falsely, and is always in the bills of every private performance; but

he is the sole exception; and he is only tolerated (musically) because he is alone. If anybody with a good voice and any manners at all wishes a social success, it can be assured him in New York. The belles say: "Can he sing? Oh, introduce him immediately: any man who can sing is such an acquisition!" We should have had private operas long ago had there been cultivated male voices; for the public performers are shy of disposing of their wares in private. I was once at a concert where the tickets were disposed of only by invitation, and at which Brignoli assisted. He was applauded, and an encore demanded; but he caused it to be announced to the audience that if they wished to hear his song again, they could do so the next night at the opera. I don't wonder at Mr. Willis, myself. But about that concert: it was extremely brilliant, and as it was not in a church, and no tickets were sold, it was thought admissible to applaud; this was an onward step in the march of musical improvement.

Then another feature became apparent. Cards of invitation were issued for a performance at a Catholic church, to take the place of vespers, which were found to be rather tame, though for a long while the psalms had been sung to the music of "La Favorita" and "I Puritani." But this performance was to be peculiar: no money was to be taken at the door, but no entrance allowed without a ticket; so all the fashion and taste of the town went. I know how hard I tried to get a card, for they were in demand; but a belle of my acquaintance took pity on me, and carried me in under her wing. Well, the music was superb: priests and fine ladies and artists made a delightful *ensemble*. The programme was an-

nounced from the altar; and one of the performers being indisposed, a popular ballad singer kindly offered his valuable services, for this occasion only. But the archbishop thought such proceedings scarcely proper for the place, and put a stop to them. However, they were resumed, shortly after, at a Baptist place of worship; and as the ministers of that persuasion have no fear of archbishops before their eyes, morceaux from "La Traviata" and other high-toned operas were offered to the ears polite, sooth to say, not unaccustomed to the strains.

I don't know whether my history is in exact chronological order; but about this time the young ladies began to sing on the outside of the screen, and in company with the tenors. Then, during the summer, there were triumphs at the watering-places, and some of them mentioned in the newspapers. It was not till last fall, however, that people in society performed at public concerts, for which placards were stuck up around the streets, and tickets for sale at the music-shops. We all know of these occasions: we know how names were ferreted out and published in the prints, and criticisms freely passed on the amateurs. Then, too, during the season, concerts have been given in private houses not a few, where the tickets, though bought, were yet bought only by friends to whom they had been sent. Still, friends sometimes were anything but obliged by the compliment. Patronesses sent parcels of cards to their acquaintances, expecting them to take twenty-five—at two dollars a card—forcing charity upon one at a prodigious rate. One woman of fashion waylaid me in her carriage. As I was passing Stewart's, she bowed so

graciously that I ran up uncovered, and on the front seat she had a pile of concert cards. She secured me, by politely bestowing one with her compliments, and of course, what had I to do? Well, she was in the fashion; they all did so; it was for charity. She would no more have done it for another purpose than she would have garroted me.

All the world has heard of the last of these entertainments, which, though given at a gorgeous mansion, was not so successful. The town had got surfeited, and some of the sweetest of the syrens were not willing to risk any further publicity. Those, in fact, who got the richest laurels were the first to shrink back into private parties and morning visits, where only lucky Vagabonds can hear them. But these amateurs are really accomplished musicians. More than one of them have voices naturally as fine as those of the great prima donnas; more than one have cultivation that would put to shame that of artists who have sung with acceptance at the Academy of Music. But they are frightened; the paying public will hear them no more.

And it is scarcely to be desired that they should. When they are tempted to the stage or to Constantinople, it is time the curtain should fall. To be sure *la haute société* abroad indulges in just such freaks. Fashion is the same everywhere: Piccolomini is the De Wilhorst of Italy; but brilliant as may be the career of both these artists, not many families are envious of such success for their own members. All the world went to see the American prima donna in "Lucia." She looked beautiful and sang delightfully; yet there are better singers in New York to-day than she. But who would



desire for them to share her triumphs? And for my part, though I applauded too, and went every night to see her, and shall go again when she sings in the "Sonnam-bula," I am sorry for her. I admire her grace and her beauty. I think her acting and her singing delightful; but I desire no such career for any friend of mine: I trust this climax of amateur singing may hinder any further publicity. Let the charming Cecílias keep their gifts for their friends and for society. Strangers have no right to hear them; will hear them coldly, and are more likely to be harsh than kind in their comments. To be sure, 'tis *piquante* to criticise the performances of belles and heiresses; but this is a dainty I would not offer the jaded palates of the general public. Such entertainments should be kept for choicer friends.

However, since Mrs. De Wilhorst has deliberately adopted the stage, I wish her all success. I am proud that an American should step at once to such a position as that she has received and deserves. I am proud that New York pronounces judgment so righteously, so fearlessly, without awaiting European sanction; elevating one of the fairest of its daughters to a high place on the lyric stage. I bid the *débutante*, with all my heart, God speed.

## VERDI.

"By'r lady, he's a good musician."

1 *Henry IV.*

THE best-abused and most admired composer of our time is Giuseppe Verdi. His music is rendered in Mexico and St. Petersburg with equal success; it sets on fire the phlegmatic English fashionables, and is the rage, at the same time, in the capitals of Europe and America, Paris and New York. The outside barbarians, as Jules Janin is pleased to call us, and the acknowledged sovereigns and arbiters of taste, alike pay him homage, while his own excitable countrymen go wild over "Ernani" and "I Lombardi," over "Louisa Miller" and "Rigoletto." Every other master is dethroned in his favor; Meyerbeer is tumbled into the dust like Dagon, and Rossini almost forgotten. Even the Quakers of Philadelphia own his unquiet sway, and at the first opportunity rushed, last Lent, thirteen times to hear Verdi, for once that they listened to Bellini and three times to Donizetti. Yet there is a set-off to these triumphs; there are those whose hearts cling to their old idols, who cannot give up Mozart and Von Weber, who will not swear by the new divinity. These prate of the noise of Verdi; they declaim about his declamation; they laugh at the "Anvil Chorus," and hold up their hands in horror at "La

Traviata." But I notice that they never stay away on "Il Trovatore" nights, while when even "Guillaume Tell" or "Don Giovanni" is given, their places are sometimes empty. Still, there is a certain force in the censure that the severely critical often pass upon Verdi. He is human, and therefore unequal. There is a degree of truth in the strictures of those educated to like other masters; only I am tired of this wholesale abuse. When a new king of music shall arise, then how the cavillers will talk of Verdi; then, when the fickle crowd fills the Academy at the production of the latest opera, and every prima donna selects the newest work for her *débat*, then how the old people will look back lingeringly at the times when Verdi was the rage! They will tell of "Trovatore" sung oftener in a year than all other operas together, of the hurdy-gurdies that taught the poorest to admire "Stride la Vampa" and "Tacea la Notte," of the nightly ovations paid to genius when "La Traviata" made the prudish English Queen forget her prudery, and "Ernani" forced the most bigoted Bostonians to neglect Beethoven. Yet these are the people who now enlighten us on Verdi's faults. They cannot forgive him that he is popular; they will not discover that his passion is the secret of his power; they will not acknowledge the genius which subdues all hearts, the fire that stirs us all, the sympathetic influence that reaches to every nature, that penetrates beneath the crust of fashion and form, down to the volcanic bosoms so often hidden beneath.

Verdi *is* noisy, he *is* unfinished, he is fitful, he is feverish. The "Anvil Chorus" is of the *ad captandum* order, and the masking music of the "Traviata" cannot be called first-rate. He repeats himself, too; you can here and

there trace the same ideas in "Ernani" and "Il Trovatore;" you will notice bars, and strains, and motifs, almost identical, in his different works. Then his mannerisms are undoubted; more than an individuality, more than intense characterization is seen in his productions; real, petty affectations cling to him, unworthy of so great a master. I own that some of his works are unequal and almost tame. I own that harsh passages too often occur in all his music; that the exquisite finish of Rossini and the splendid science of Meyerbeer are everywhere lacking; that noisy choruses and orchestral crashes are sometimes made to cover over bare thoughts, or hide the wants of Beethoven's spirituality and Mozart's grandeur. But I will own nothing more.

If Verdi is not spiritual, he is intensely human; if he is not religious, he is passionate beyond all composers; if he has not the profundity of the Germans, the tender sweetness of Bellini, or the light, exquisite grace of the French opera, he has merits all his own, which none can claim but he; which are striking; which speak to us all; which secure his triumphs; which have placed him rightly where he is; which have made him absolute king of all the opera houses in the world. I venture to say that, within the last two years, his operas have been sung in every great city of Europe or America oftener than the operas of all other composers. I venture to say that the airs from "Il Trovatore" were familiar to more people within a year after the production of that work than ever happened before to any work of any musical writer. Now, when a man obtains such a popularity as this, there is no blinking the fact; no amount of carping criticism can do away

with it ; no shrugging of shoulders or raising of eye-brows can affect it ; no sneering silence can answer why his works will crowd a theatre in any capital in the world, at times when any other opera would be sung to empty benches. Nothing but genius could accomplish this ; noise alone is not competent to such a task ; and not genius alone, but a genius eminently suited to the genius of the age.

And herein I believe lies the secret of Verdi's power : he expresses, he embodies the fitful vehemence, the material character even, the rushing, headstrong impetuosity, the stormy demonstrations of this demonstrative age. He is the most material of musicians. He is the Miss Heron of composers. His merits are of that apparent sort which all can feel. Not only, however, the most uneducated share the emotions which he excites : these feelings are common to us all ; the high and low alike love and hate ; the most careful critic and the most sensuous poet come beneath this sway ; the craziest lover and the coldest banker are stirred by the rush of feeling that speaks in Verdi's strains. To be sure, the impetuous, the young, the emotional feel it the most keenly ; those brimful of passion themselves are excited most by this exciting music ; but others, outwardly calm, are also affected by it. These apparently phlegmatic people, who conceal such a wealth of intensity under their cold exteriors, these Jane Eyres and John Halifaxes all like Verdi's music. Who cannot see the connexion, the similarity rather, between such geniuses as the author of Jane Eyre and Verdi, between Madame Dudevant, between De la Roche, and the passionate composer ? He does not at all represent the thinking, doubting phase of our age ; he has not the

profound meaning, the subtle ideas of Meyerbeer, or of many of the writers of this day. He aspires not to the infinite and superhuman ; but he searches the depth of mortal feeling ; he shares the most violent emotions ; he expresses in the most absolute manner the unrest, the eagerness, the mad torrent of feeling characteristic of the nineteenth century. The agonizing wail of the "Miserere," the wild leaping into song of the *Di tale amor*, the sad plaint of the finale of "Il Trovatore," what can there be in words to equal these ? What has there been in music to surpass them ?

Then all this is done in melody. It is impossible for a composer to seize hold of the hearts of men without the aid of melody. The most elaborate ornamentation, the most admirable combinations, the most perfect harmony gratify indeed a cultured ear and satisfy a cultured taste, but do not touch the nerve and never rouse the feelings. We can listen calmly to the music that evidences the completest science, when some snatch of singular or sweet melody shall bring tears to the driest eyes, and effect the sternest man. Verdi has this gift of melody in as great a degree as any composer—the gift of expressing passion in melody. There is not a strain in the "Trovatore," from beginning to end, that is not at once beautiful and full of meaning, that lingers not in the memory ; and several pieces in "Ernani" are among the most wonderful reachings out, the most tremendous utterances of earthly passion that I have ever heard. The two great things of Meyerbeer, the *Robert*, *toi que j'aime* and the *Ah, mon fils*, only can compare with them ; and of these, the latter is a mother's holy feeling, rather subdued and religious in character, and

the former partakes in some measure of the unhuman nature of the "Robert le Diable."

Donizetti, too, resembles Verdi in this extraordinary intensity; his music is certainly smoother, and at times as dramatically powerful; but there are declamatory bursts in Verdi which surpass any similar attempts of the older master; there are one or two notes in the finale of the third act of "Ernani," and in the soprano and tenor writing of the fourth act of the same opera, that transcend, in this respect, any single thing that Donizetti has done. Verdi has more of this one peculiar quality that constitutes his greatness than Donizetti, and so is better liked than the other. When Donizetti approaches the intensity of Verdi, he is in more demand. The "Lucrezia," the "Lucia," the fourth act of the "Favorita," are of this character, but still not so wildly, uncontrollably passionate as Verdi's greatest efforts.

I do not call Verdi the greatest of composers, but I do call him the most effective; I do not claim for him an absolute superiority to all others in all respects, but I claim that he who seizes and expresses the spirit of the age in which he lives, is a man of undoubted genius; that he who so makes his mark, who can so affect a material age, who can so triumph when the art he worships is at its culmination, when music is of all arts the best appreciated and most loved, at the moment of its history when it has reached the highest point of excellence, he who triumphs then, triumphs indeed. Success must be the test; and this usurper, this Napoleon, this parvenu, has got the better of the legitimates; there is no shaking his throne, no disturbing his empire. I am willing to take the oath of allegiance.

## MYSELF.

———" And must I ravel out  
My weaved-up follies?"

*Richard II.*

Who wouldn't be a Vagabond? Here am I, enjoying myself amazingly under my invisible cap. I go around, like the prince in the fairy tale, and hear what my friends think of me, or of my other self. I get the benefit of some very impartial criticism, am censured to my face by the best bred people, and sometimes rated soundly by those who would not offend me wittingly or willingly, for the world. I paid a visit the other morning, and one of my most charming acquaintances asked me if I read "The Vagabond" papers. I felt my heart in my throat, for I was particularly anxious for the goddess's good opinion, but repressed my agitation, and said inquiringly: "'The Vagabond?'—'The Vagabond?'" "Yes, in the *Sunday Times*." I thought I had seen such articles; and this most delightful of maidens refreshed my memory by mentioning the titles of several. She absolutely recollected what I had written about: I was willing to fall down and worship her on the spot. But more, she remembered what I had said: she commented upon the style, she criticised the criticisms, she praised several papers, and lifted me up



into the seventh heaven, and then, alas! she recollected that I had dispraised one of her favorites. And then the poor Vagabond, who had been swelling with pride, who had fancied himself an Addison or a Steele, who was putting on airs, and smiling so graciously, and listening so attentively, drew back in his shell. The malignant, shrewish young woman, whose tongue it must be owned is severe—and of all things a caustic tongue is most unseemly in a young female; this virago, this Xantippe, this Katharine, this Beatrice let loose her arrows at an unarmed, defenceless, and, as she thought, absent Vagabond. He was unfair, he was unjust, he was ungentlemanly (the unkindest cut of all). He was pedantic, he was ignorant, he was affected, he was ridiculously natural. Oh! the vocabulary of censure, the storm of words that she rattled down on me! Hailstones and coals of fire! And I, who had been on the point of raising my visor, of bowing my head, like Ivanhoe, to receive the laurel crown from Rowena's hand, I took my beaver instead, and wished Rowena a good morning.

But I grow philosophical and tough: I begin to resemble eels. Several such scorplings have enabled me to endure the flames of martyrdom as calmly as St. Lawrence in the picture of Domenichino, at Mr. Goupil's. Apropos of pictures! Another of my adventures I must tell the story of. Don't every hero like to fight his battles o'er again? Don't every vagabond relate his escapades, especially if they are connected with the sex? What if it is vanity of vanities, I talk under a veil. What if it is presuming to suppose that my readers want to know the story! I am sure some of

them are curious about my identity, because one of my own acquaintances asked me whether I knew who wrote "The Vagabond," and I flatly told her "No." Sir Walter Scott denied the authorship of the Waverley novels, and so—you see. The countenance I have in this respect reminds me, too, how vain Cicero was; how he prated of his services to the state; how Lamartine twaddled about the pictures in his old Bible; how George Sand inflicts whole volumes of her infantile memoirs on the public; how delightful Franklin's autobiography is acknowledged to be, and persuades me that the Vagabond—I leave others to pursue the parallel. But, apropos of pictures!

A week or two ago, I received the most charming of letters, written in the daintiest of hands, directed to "The Vagabond," and signed "Norah"—a very pretty name, by the way. Irish, too, suggestive of Moore and Norah Creina. This delicate epistle began with the most delicate of flatteries, and was couched throughout in the dearest and delightfulest of language, and begged me to write more about pictures, and to speak of the artists. Thus inspired, what Vagabond could refuse. Not I, certainly. I studied the letter carefully, and determined which of the artists mentioned I thought Norah cared most about; some lover, or brother, or father I supposed. I went to the studio with a friend, saw the pictures she had told of, and wrote something for the sake of Norah, which I hope she has seen. If not, I will leave a copy of my criticism at this office, and she can have it by proving property, as the advertisements say. However, I have no doubt that I hit the mark, for I have since received a note of thanks, signed by another name,

but expressed in the same felicitous and flattering phraseology, impossible to be counterfeited; and if my critical acumen is not sadly at fault, I know Norah, though Norah doesn't know the Vagabond. In the games of the carnival, if the mask falls, one is entitled to look at the black eyes it concealed.

But I have another correspondent, one of those bewitching creatures, who in disguise are so daring; who forget the story of Tancred and Clorinda; who tantalize, and delight, and provoke by turns. This unknown, like the lady of the Green Mantle in "Redgauntlet," veils herself under an initial, and in a style more individualized, but different entirely from Norah—characteristic, too, I am sure, often saying some civil things, but curtly and piquantly, and so of course with a seasoning that adds vastly to their *gout*; she wants me to write on woman's influence and woman's sphere. You darling incognito, I think woman's right and duty are to charm the men, to write lively letters to Vagabonds. I think she adorns her sex when she captivates ours with mystery; (what god was it, was blind?) that she is irresistible when she makes no attacks; that when Eve said to Adam, "God thy law, thou mine," they were both in Paradise; and if the head of the woman is the man, the heart of man always belongs to woman.

But, my gracious correspondents, don't be angry; I am not violating any decorum by talking with you in public: your secret is known, but not you. I wanted to answer your charming selves, and how could I do it but in character and in print? I hope you don't think I have been no *chevalier sans reproche* in thus telling my triumphs; for is it not a triumph to gain an interest

in the imagination of two such fair ones? I was sure to preserve that interest only while the mystery was preserved. Why not let me heighten it; why not let me intensify my personality; why not let me gloat over my good luck to my friends who read these papers? If two have felt so kindly towards the Vagabond, may not others have a sufficient concern to read the story with a sparkling eye? Pray don't let your own glisten into spite, or those favorable sentiments turn to indignation. I wouldn't for the world incur your wrath.

I said one of my correspondents gave me an initial: it is X. Now I don't know any X. family in which there is a daughter who could write that letter. Perhaps she thinks she has detected me as Juliet did Romeo at the ball, "too early seen unknown, and known too late;" but I fear me 'tis a mistake. As for the Vagabond, every time he is presented to a Miss X., he will flutter until he discovers whether or not 'tis his X. So beware, my unknown; be chary of the introductions you grant. The Vagabond is not now among your avowed admirers; you need not try your powers of penetration upon the crowd who now strive for a smile, or, sweeter yet, a sigh; but every time a new adorer bows at the shrine, it may be he who possesses your secret. I shall recognise you, and you not me.

For you don't know whether I'm an Adonis or a Bluebeard: one lady thought me an old man, another concluded I was a hunchback. However, you may take it for granted that I resemble in form the Apollo Belvidere (which the women all prefer to the Venus of the Tribune), and in face, the youth whose beauty was so super-eminent that the nymphs pursued him in the stream and

grove, until he finally sought refuge on the banks of a secluded lake, and, contemplating his own image, was by compassionate divinities transformed to a plant, which has ever since borne his name, Narcissus. I, radiant in charms of person, found no rest in society, at any rate where they danced the German, but sought refuge in these columns, where I am hidden under the Protean type, and the Vagabond is perchance an object of interest to Xes and Norahs, who, if they knew the original, could trace no resemblance to the flower. Cruel ones, do not say he also liked to contemplate himself, although this paper give you cause.

Victor Hugo says somewhere, in reply to those who had accused him of egotism: "Do not those who complain of the writers that constantly say 'I, I,' see that when I write of myself, I write of you; that showing my own opinions and personality, I disclose yours; that this 'I, I,' really means 'you, you?'"

## HENRY W. BELLOWS.

"I know you wise, religious."

*Henry VIII.*

OUTSPOKENNESS is a virtue. Who is there that appreciates not a frank, manly expression of opinion, a fearless maintenance of doctrines sure to bring upon their advocate somewhat of censure and even of reproach? Who feels not a genuine sympathy with any attempt at independence, with the struggle to get free from any trammels? Who admires not the courage that dares in behalf of others, that speaks in favor of a caste to those whose disfavor only that caste has received, that flings itself into the breach, sure to become the mark of many a bitter sarcasm and cruel criticism; but careless of these if it can but say a good word for a great cause, can but relieve a great public interest from unjust odium? The very importance of the aid which Dr. Bellows brings to the stage, arises more from his position than from his talents, undoubted though they be; and this very position exposes him in a peculiar manner to the harshest strictures, the unkindest misconstructions. All honor, then, to his boldness! He believes himself to be right; and, whatever men may think or say of the force or justice of his arguments, they must admire the abstract courage that prompts his conduct.

His courage in this instance, however, is of a piece with his general character. I have heard a number of his discourses at different times and at various intervals, and the first characteristic to force itself upon my observation has invariably been the outspokenness of the man. Many a preacher of peculiar doctrines in this metropolis hides them for the sake of popularity. The Calvinists are said to reserve their sermons on predestination for rainy Sundays, when only the faithful are likely to persist in their attendance; a Unitarian scarcely alludes to the distinctive tenets of his sect; and I have even heard a Roman Catholic priest, in all his robes, promise to say nothing that could reasonably offend the prejudices of his heretic hearers. Not so with Dr. Bellows: he holds unpopular doctrines, he arrives at conclusions entirely dissimilar from those generally entertained; but he never shirks their utterance, he never swerves from what seems to him the line of duty, he never scruples to avow openly, and in the face of the world, what he learns in his closet, in contemplation or study. What he learns in darkness, that speaks he in light; and what he hears in the ear, that preaches he upon the house-top. Frequently his notions come into contact with those of even his habitual hearers; but he believes in a free interchange of ideas; he promulgates his own, upholds them with all the skill and ability of which he is possessed, and leaves the result to take care of itself.

Akin to this courage—a part, indeed, a cause of it—is earnestness, sincerity, an abiding conviction of the correctness of his opinion and the justice of his course. A man can never fight boldly in a cause of which he is

ashamed, and certainly not so well for a cause in which his heart is not enlisted. The deep conviction of his being right makes him careless of consequences, while zeal, we all know, is better at times than skill or strength. And, whatever may be said or thought of other traits of Dr. Bellows, his earnestness is seldom questioned. Thus, character rather than talent is uppermost in him; traits that make and mark the man seem to me more prominent than those which distinguish the preacher or the orator. I speak, of course, of those traits as they are unfolded in his public career, and especially in his public speeches.

He belongs to a class peculiar to our time—of serious, earnest, thoughtful, yet practical men; men whom I respect most profoundly, though I do not always nor altogether concur with them; men who think they have a mission, and speak it; who have a work to do, and do it; who have a doctrine to preach, and preach it; a class as different as may be from the ordinary orthodox ministers, and from the ordinary popular preachers. They are as much unlike the prosy, long-winded, narrow-minded, bigoted sermonizer, as to the shallow, selfish, flashy orator. They differ, too, from the talented and learned upholders of present ideas and present systems; they are reformers, or at least progressive in their tendencies; they preach of this life, but forget not the next; they scorn not the concerns of this world, they believe in a religion which affects man's doings here, they care for his present well-being—for his advancement—for his comfort—for his amusement; but fail not to consider and teach him to consider, earnestly and anxiously, his future destiny. Whether they take



the right course, whether they direct our thoughts into the proper channel, whether they teach true doctrines in relation to religion itself, is not the question to discuss here; but I believe they are right in combining thus the interests of two worlds; in looking to and caring for a complex nature; in regarding the present as well as the future. They are scarcely, it seems to me, preachers in the technical meaning we attach to the word, but they preach and teach in reality. They certainly depart from the conventional rules and the conventional idea of the pulpit; but do they swerve from the rules dictated either by sound judgment or enlightened taste? I confess I admire in them this double sympathy for the interests of here and hereafter; this recognition of both the soul and body of man; this consideration for material and immaterial concerns; this acceptance of fact and this endeavor after abstract good; this realism and idealism combined.

At the head of these men stands Henry W. Bellows. At the head, by force of character, by boldness of deed, by outspokenness of language, by his talent and learning, by his position as the teacher of a metropolitan congregation, distinguished for wealth, refinement, and social influence. His talent and learning, let me add his taste, are more than considerable, are distinguished. As he seems to many to have attained a just medium in matters of higher moment, so in the culture of his intellect and the practice of his art. He is profoundly philosophical in the cast of his mind, and yet eminently practical in the application of his inferences. An original thinker, he has enriched himself with stores of the soundest learning and most generous

culture. Logic holds a higher place in his esteem than rhetoric, and his first care is to convince; but he disdains not to persuade and please. He is, however, more anxious to affect your reason than your other powers. It is the sound deductions of his fine intellect that compel your assent; it is the exact appreciation of events and character that extorts your concurrence; it is the well-balanced mind that advances his ideas with vigor, that sets them forth with effect, that provides him with arguments often incontrovertible, and enables him to arrive at conclusions from which it is impossible for his hearers to recede. A scholar, versed in the lore of ancient and of modern schools, he is yet free from prejudice or pedantry; a philosopher, he is willing to examine the systems of others, and find good in all, though not the good he is in search of. Though heartily convinced of the truth of his doctrine, and earnestly desirous to set forth its merits, he extends a Christian and courteous forbearance to all, and is the farthest possible from dogmatism or arrogance in the enunciation of what he believes to be true.

But he is also far from neglecting the graces of style. His taste is as cultivated as his profounder powers; his rhetoric at once chaste and ornate, correct and elegant, his command of language ample and exceedingly felicitous, he unites the so often opposite qualities of strength and beauty. *Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.* His style must at once engage the attention of the indifferent and secure the approbation of discriminating listeners; he frequently rises to the splendid, both in thought and expression, and knows how to descend without shocking the most fastidious. Touches

of true and tender pathos, though rare, are not altogether wanting in his sermons, and contrast finely with occasional bursts of elaborate oratory. However, he uses with a sparing hand these shining gifts.

If there is any lack felt in his discourse, it is that of a burning, passionate, overwhelming eloquence. He never is inspired; he never carries you away; he is not of the impetuous, emotional order. There are times and places when a torrent of living, breathing words, or a soul-stirring, trumpet-like appeal to the conscience or heart, would be more effective than all his calmly considered and carefully expressed deductions. Though such emotions as eloquence excites are, with me, more transitory at least in their effects, they are, for the time, more exquisite than the approving interest which my judgment always dictates in Dr. Bellows's discourses. The ecstasy which superlative eloquence awakens, the magnetic thrill, the spell-bound attention, are effects unknown to his audiences. Once or twice I have known him touch nerves that go close to the heart; but generally, he is no master of the feelings. He speaks to the intellect and taste. Whether the preacher should not rather address these than the heart, one might doubt, did we not know how powerful a motive passion is in influencing human character. Now Dr. Bellows is the most convincing of orators, because the most dispassionate.

On the whole, few speakers give me more unalloyed pleasure: some of those more highly gifted, at least gifted with the more striking talents which subdue and move the masses, educated and uneducated, some of these frequently err in matters of taste, occasionally

shock your notions of propriety, or offend you by the appearance of insincerity. But if Dr. Bellows never reaches the heights of the true sublime, neither does he ever sink to the depths of affectation, showy rant, or stupid insipidity. If there were more orthodox preachers of his stamp, the number of those who dissent from their teachings would diminish, though not perhaps disappear. If all the advocates of other doctrines were like him, the ineffectual fires of orthodoxy might pale. Yet truth does not depend for a lasting triumph upon the efforts of friends or foes; and though in the din of the contest her voice be lost, it is never stilled—though “crushed to earth, the eternal years of God are hers.”

The recent address of Dr. Bellows before the American Dramatic Fund Society illustrates at once his talent and his character. It is marked by the peculiarities of the man; but it has a further significance when considered in reference to the times. Its author is a representative man; he has done an unusual thing; he, the ecclesiastical descendant of the Puritans, has preached in a playhouse and to players, on the stage in behalf of the stage. He has said severe things about the profession, plainly and to their faces, and members of it have gone up to him and congratulated him afterwards; he has stretched a kindly hand to those with whom his own calling has been at war so long, and that hand is quickly and warmly grasped, showing that there is no need for the fancied antagonism. He has perhaps inaugurated a revolution; he has taken the first step which costs so much; St. Denis can now walk with his head in his hand. He has recognised the theatre as a fact; he has treated the drama as a practical man should, as a politic

preacher should, as a real philanthropist should. It exists, and centuries of abuse and enmity from the "unco' guid" have availed nothing against it; it flaunts itself in their faces to-day as proudly as ever. What they cannot ignore or destroy, Dr. Bellows proposes to reform; to praise where praise is due, to censure where censure should be bestowed. An instinct so ineradicable, a passion so lasting, a taste so universal as that of the race for the drama, must be intended by God for good. Let us get the good out of it.

I call him a wise man. I am willing to fight under his banners in this crusade.

## AMERICAN ART.

"The Art itself is Nature."

*Winter's Tale.*

I HAVE been several times, of late, to see the young genius who is playing at Burton's theatre, and have recognised in his performances the indescribable and unattainable influence, which I confess I seek for in life and art under their various phases; that alone which subdues the educated and the illiterate, the old and the young, the cold and the impulsive. I have felt the power of genius. To be sure, you sometimes have to sit through an act for the sake of one touch, or one point; but when the time comes it is transcendent, it goes straight home, it compensates. Young Booth has the unmistakable fire, the electric spark, the god-like quality, which mankind have agreed to worship. The vein is with him just struck, but there is a mine behind; the workman is raw, and his tools unwonted, but he is young, and all the more interesting just now from his faults; they so evidently spring from inexperience, they are so palpably negative, they are so curable, that they enlist your sympathies, while four or five times in an evening he does something that requires no sympathy, no allowance, no toleration; that commands, controls, overwhelms.

The young man is but twenty-three, handsome, graceful, with a countenance full of a higher beauty than that of outline, full of expression, and mobile as any that I have ever watched ; with an eye, fitting window to the soul that looks out through it ; a voice musical and powerful and manageable ; with an impulsive, soul-full nature, that prompts such strokes as the rendering of the line in "Richard III.:"

"What do they in the north,  
When they should serve their sovereign in the west?"

or the tone in which he calls the ghost in "Hamlet," "Father!" or the look that comes over his face in "Romeo," after he has killed Tybalt. These things are alone enough to stamp his mettle, are such as no amount of labor and pains would enable an actor to do, as mark the great and impassable gulf for ever fixed between such as Booth and the clever, careful students, even (I dare say it) like Wallack and Davenport. Of course, he slurs over lines that they read elegantly ; of course, he is unequal while they are finished ; of course, he is rough and they are smooth ; but give me one touch of real feeling, one breath of absolute genius, one spark of enthusiasm before all the finish, all the elaboration, all the study in the world. I do not, I am sure, inappreciate or undervalue culture, but there is something higher, truer, realer. I certainly am far from condemning care or study, but some things these cannot accomplish ; something says to them : "So far shall ye go, and no farther." This is not said to Edwin Booth ; there is no Rubicon he may not pass ; there are, how-

ever, many for him yet to cross. He is undeveloped, chaotic, plastic.

He is the type of American art; he symbolizes the dawn, whose first streaks appear in the horizon. Everything in art, here, is yet unformed, but the spirit of God has moved on the waters; and there is a struggle, a quickening in the womb, that betokens life, a faint cry that shall yet grow into an aspiration, a few significant attempts that shall yet be successes. All American art is of this nature, is impulsive, erratic, irregular, but yet full of promise and undeveloped power. I confess, I do not agree with those who see nothing to hope for in American art, because it has not received the last degree of polish, or the final touch of the master. I am not so disheartened as those who seek for evenness of elaboration, but will not discern true touches of nature. Of course, America has yet produced no Rachel, no Milton, no Mozart, nor is she likely soon to do so; but the stammerings of the infant muses are heard; not unlike those that whispered centuries ago in Greece, as unmistakable as the numbers that preceded Homer, as the strivings of Perugino who preceded Raphael, as musical as the utterings of Cimarosa, who came before Mozart.

Neither do I think that American art will ever assume the form which some are looking for, and because they do not find, declare it has no form: it will be turbulent and impassioned, even when developed; not divinely calm, but intensely human; not the divinity enthroned on Olympus, but the incarnate one that suffers, and feels, and is tempted. The intimations already given assure us of this: the artists whom America has



already produced, the most individualized, the most generally recognised, the most powerful, have been emotional, brimful of earnestness, perhaps even stormy. In music, Gottschalk indicates the difference between European art, the digest of centuries, and American, the product of a young people. Thalberg and Gottschalk, both as composers and artists, fitly symbolize the characters of foreign and native genius: the one calm, collected, Jove-like, the other stirring, electric, Apollo. So, too, Miss Heron, the genius who crushes out criticism, and sets coldness itself on fire, who forces you to feel though you may not admire, who gathers up all the strings of your nature in her grasp, and tightens or sweeps them at once, is certainly American in her enthusiastic, excitable style. Even our painters catch the spirit, and Mr. Church has embodied it in his "Niagara," perhaps the finest picture yet done by an American; at least, that which is fullest of feeling. The idea of motion he has imparted to his canvass, the actual feeling you have of the tremble of the fall, of the glancing of the sunbeam, of the tossing of the rapids, of the waving of the rainbow, of the whirling of the foam, of the mad rush of the cataract, I take to be the great excellence of his production; and surely this is akin to the influence which I describe as paramount in American art.

Neither is this influence to be decried as altogether hasty and uneducated, or unformed. It is not only the fruit of ill-digested thought, it is not only the rapid utterance of youth, the boastful, coarse excitement of ignorance. If it is inspired by Niagara, it is grand and sublime; it is natural to the nation, since nature herself

has given us such a type; it is wild and ungovernable, mad at times, but all power is terrible at times. It is the effect of various causes; it is a true development of American mind; the result of democracy, of individuality, of the expansion of each, of the liberty allowed to all; of ineradicable and lofty qualities in human nature. It is inspired not only by the irresistible cataract, but by the mighty forest, by the thousand miles of river, by the broad continent we call our own, by the onward march of civilization, by the conquering of savage areas; characteristic alike of the western backwoodsman, of the Arctic explorer, the southern fillibuster, and the northern merchant. So, of course, it gets expression in our art.

Not in ours only. Let those who utterly condemn it look abroad: see how Verdi's music has usurped a place in the opera-houses of Europe, and holds sway over the universal musical taste of the world. Let them bethink them of Turner's pictures, undoubtedly stamped with the same impress, burning, speaking, instinct with this same feeling which I strive to indicate. Let them acknowledge in the intensity of modern fiction, in the dramas of Dumas and the novels of Dudevant, in the terse, vigorous works of Charlotte Brontë and Carlisle, of Kingsley and Tennyson, something of the nineteenth century spirit, directed and guided, perhaps, to better advantage by those who have been at school for ages, but more unmistakably uttered here, more openly avowed, more absolutely expressed. What if our art, then, is in its infancy: it is at least born into the world. We may wish it had already attained perfection; we may relish with a more delicate taste the exquisite pro-

ductions of the older world; but let us not entirely despise the first fruits of this western Atlantis.

Instead of decrying whatever has the mark of peculiarity, the freshness of flavor, the smell of the pine-woods, the raciness, the heartiness of youth and strength, would it not be better to recognise and appreciate what of good there is, and develop, and train, and culture it into perfection? Instead of being angry with Palmer because he dared deviate from classic models of beauty, let us encourage him to embody the forms of loveliness flitting in his brain; let us prefer Indian girls to Greek slaves, American originals to copies of old and effete ideas.

In his profound and interesting volume on America and Europe, Count Gurowski comments upon many of our national peculiarities, but, to my mind, discusses matters of art with more skill than questions of races; at any rate, arrives at conclusions in those domains with which I can more readily concur, and in particular enunciates this idea, that the accord with culture and study of the inspiration conferred by genius is the problem of our epoch. Kingsley also, in "Two Years Ago," declares that art is not only imitation, not only the fruit of labor, neither only the plenary inspiration, but the union, the marriage of the highest nature with the last results of culture. I accept the dictum, and believe that American art will solve the problem. It seems to me to possess the inspiration: the culture can be attained.

Here of course is the lack. The genius is not generally nor sufficiently appreciated. Materialism has too great weight with us. The beautiful maxim of Goethe is more applicable to us than to any other civilized na-

tion: "Take care of the beautiful, for the useful will take care of itself." We do not, as a nation, take care of the beautiful. The artists are not cherished, the arts are not fostered; but improvement is visible even in these matters. A keener relish, a livelier interest is awakened for art: its influence spreads, the circles widen daily, like the eddies in a pool. I think I detect an increasing consideration for such things. When I remember the kindly feeling evinced for Mrs. de Wilhorst; when I recall the brilliant crowds that greeted her first attempts; when I reflect that the Academy of Music was offered her free of rent for her benefit; when I hear that the subscription list for her farewell concerts is filled with distinguished names, and that it is in contemplation to offer her a substantial token of goodwill, in still another form, on the eve of her departure, and thus materially assist her endeavors, I think that some progress is made or making. When I remember how instantly Miss Heron's genius was recognised, although exclusively American, and, in its excellences, unlike that of foreign schools; when I remember the audiences that attended the first nights of "Fascination" and "Leonore" last winter; when I think of the appreciation of Gottschalk, I say that American art will not always languish. I hope for the day when those whose tastes and faculties are cultured by study and travel, by intercourse with the gifted, and opportunities of witnessing the best in the various domains of art, will not unnaturally turn from what is American, because it is not perfect; when they will blow every spark of genius into a flame; when they will gladly foster our own art; when Mr. Fry's "Leonora" shall be sung at the New York opera-house, and

Mr. Jacopi, the American tenor, shall think it better policy not to Italianize his name. Meanwhile, the millenium is not yet arrived ; but, as the comet approaches, we must make haste in what we have to do, so I shall go to see Booth every night next week, and visit the Academy of Design every day.

## AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHTS.

"Quid ego, et populus mecum, desideret."

HORACE.

At last we have American plays. Several times, of late, our managers have presented, with commendable care, the productions of American authors, or the representations of American life. The stage seems about to assume its ancient office, to become again the censor of the people, and the picture of the times. Hitherto, our audiences have been content with the performance of English comedies, or tragedies whose tone and coloring were altogether of another date and era from our own. True, indeed, passion is cosmopolite, and all men are akin at one stroke of nature. We weep over the woes of Virginia, or are indignant at the wrongs of Othello, quite as quickly as if the Moor or the Roman were native here and to our manner born. True, too, there is a charm in these pictures of other days and other times, like that of reading Walter Scott's novels or Macaulay's histories. I am no advocate for banishing Congreve and Sheridan from our modern stage. I, too, delight in classic tragedies. But the theatre has yet another mission; it has to speak to us of to-day; to lash our follies, to portray our life, to show us how we of the nineteenth century live and love and hate:

for there are traits in modern life as susceptible of humorous portraiture as any that caught the eye of Wicherly or Fielding in the days of merry Charles or stupid Anne; there are incidents and characters around us as full of passion and pathos as those which engaged the pens of Sophocles or Racine. We are men still, and our nature is unchanged. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

I accept gladly, then, the indications of a new day dawning upon our stage. I am glad to see the first fruits gathered from so rich a field, and to read in the bills "Never before acted," and "Written expressly for this theatre." The very tendency to imitation of French dramas, which has its repulsive features, has also something of good in it. For these French plays are at least modern. They describe modern life—phases of modern life, it is true, which are not (here, at any rate, thank God!) the most marked or characteristic; but still they go not back hundreds of years for their plots, and personages and scenes.

In this light, then, I see great merit in the play of "Fascination," now or recently acted at Burton's theatre. Apart from its moral tone, upon which I proffer no comment, it possesses this striking excellence of opening the way in a new direction. It mirrors real life, holds up no glass that distorts the features reflected in it, presents no caricature, but pictures society of this day. Though the scene is laid in Italy, the people are such as we see around us; for, in fact, well-bred people are as much alike to day all over the world in manners as they are in dress. The etiquettes of behavior are as widely spread as the fashions of boots and bonnets.

And how delightful to see society pictured, not travestied! We are surfeited with the satires of these would-be Juvenals, with the imitations of those who have never seen the original. A picture of modern life, where princesses are not vulgar and artists not sycophants, is a rarity indeed on the New York boards.

It is indeed a fact that "Fascination" has had predecessors or pioneers in this path, the success of which is good proof of the demand which exists. How many times has "The Lady of Lyons" been played! How hackneyed is "The Hunchback!" And yet even these are not so universal in their interest as they might be, but are in some respects provincial. There are mannerisms about them, like swaddling clothes entangling the footsteps of the infant drama. Still their popularity shows how quickly any public recognises the attempt to hold the mirror up to its own nature.

But a play for the children of this generation should not only take the comparatively untrodden field to which I have alluded. It is not merely the province of the modern stage to adapt itself in scenes and characters to modern life, and thus imitate the novel which has so completely dethroned the old-fashioned romance; for who now reads "Clarissa Harlowe," except as a curiosity or an historical picture? Even the "Spectator" is set aside by the many for "Jane Eyre" and "The New-comer." None but students penetrate into the literature of a bygone century. Each age has its writers, each age must have its own plays. Our stage is for us; and as we live intensely, the stage must furnish intense scenes. It must reflect not only our character and tone



of mind, but our passions and our manifestations of passion. Americans are proverbially excitable and excitement-loving. They find "The Rivals" slow, and care not to go every week to see "She Stoops to Conquer;" while "Camille," with all its impropriety, draws for an entire season; not because of its impropriety, but because of its intensity. The interest of "Fascination" is not heightened because its heroine is a wanton. I can conceive alterations in the plot which should obviate the objections which have been urged against its morality, and yet leave the excellencies untouched. There is fearful, fascinating intensity enough in life without resorting to purlieus and characters that we blush to name.

Neither is it your bloody melodramatic pieces which are destined eventually to bear the palm. The "Stranger" and the "Lady of Lyons" excite as many tears as if they murdered their mistresses, or went mad themselves. The George Barnwells and Jack Sheppards have had their day. Passion seeks other manifestations, now, than it did in the days of the Borgias. Lovers do not carry off beautiful maidens by force and arms, even on the highways of Italy. The poison and the dagger are not among the ordinary furnishings of gentlemen's cupboards and wardrobes. All this sort of thing is as completely out of date as the giants and enchanted castles of the troubadours.

But a drama which should possess the eloquence of George Sand, without her outrageous violations of propriety; the admirable character-drawing and the fervor of French fiction generally, with the purity and the propriety of the English sort, would inaugurate a new

school. A modern play, based on modern life, with characters such as can be seen around us; incidents such as are not of unusual occurrence, but placed in felicitous juxtaposition; an interest that shall not flag—for dulness is damnation in theatrical parlance; and situations where the hideousness of vice may be made apparent, but its fascinations need not be so minutely portrayed—such is the ideal of a Vagabond.

It is hard, doubtless, to discriminate; to draw the line between proper dulness content to dwell in decencies for ever, and the flashy melodramatic style. But between these two lies an unoccupied province. The unusual skill manifested in "Fascination," in the management of incidents, in the portrayal of character, but especially in the passionate dialogue of some scenes, shows plainly enough that there is dramatic talent in our midst. I do not mean to present this piece as perfect in everything but plot; I think it has other faults. The catastrophe is badly contrived, and there are portions of the play that drag; but the language is everywhere easy and terse, and the third act is absolutely superb. The excellencies that are prominent are the very ones most desirable in the class of productions that I call for, and that there is a need for. The play itself I regard as a significant attempt, a feeling after the right. Whether the authors are the men destined to fill the vacancy which exists; to achieve the success that will certainly be attained by some one, remains to be seen. Men sometimes make one effort, and place themselves near where they would be, but failing of a complete triumph, never attempt again. Men sometimes exhaust themselves in a single endeavor, and their after trials are but repetitions.

Others, who do but poorly at the outset, subsequently eclipse all rivals. Many a playwright has failed at first: even Dr. Johnson's "Irene" was damned. Byron was not the only poet whose "Hours of Idleness" was twaddle, nor Wordsworth the only writer of whom the reviewers declared, "This will never do."

The critics have united of late—I mean the thinking, careful critics—in censuring some attempts at portraying American society; and I confess these so-called American plays have gross and glaring faults. But still they, too, betoken this necessity; they, too, strive to answer this call, and are indications of the craving that exists. We are waiting for our Menander and Aristophanes. We want our Molière. The pool is troubled, but no man steps in. These writers who have caricatured us have done something: Guido di Senna and Perugino came before Raphael. They who have paraded events which have occurred in families, though they made manifest their own barrenness of invention, yet showed observation; and, in some instances, characters have been drawn nicely and carefully. There is room for comedy as well as for profounder dramas. The sock need not tread upon the buskin's heel; and I am sure Mr. Burton has pictures of both Tragedy and Comedy over his door. But, in this millennium of the stage for which I am waiting, and which Dr. Bellows will probably predict when he addresses the theatrical profession; in this dramatic Atlantis, to rise out of the waters, Melpomene will, I fancy, preserve her ancient supremacy, and plays of passion be preferred to plays of manners. These are evanescent in interest as the fashions they portray: those are lasting as the nature of man.

But both will be welcome. Meanwhile, let us appreciate what of good the gods provide, and not go hungry because we cannot dine on ambrosia, or even on *pâté de foie gras*.

## PARTIES.

" Fashion and Ceremony."

*Hamlet.*

SOME people are never weary of condemning the parties of New York. They are continually talking of the frivolity of fashion, and the dulness of dancing. To hear them, you would suppose they preferred books to belles and beaux, and the armchair to the opera. Yet, I constantly see these critics in the rooms they say are so hot and crowded ; I constantly meet them at the parties they call so stupid, and talk with them at the concerts where the singing is so bad. Those who affect the profoundest contempt for American amusements, who declare the Bachelors' Ball cannot be compared with Almack's, who ridicule the opera, and think nothing endurable after a winter in Paris—these never stay away when they get cards ; they dance the latest at a German, and are out every night in the season. Despite the affectation of not being interested in society, they have been faithful to every little musical soirée during the warm weather, and crowded to every wedding, even if they had to go in the morning, and stay but an hour. Even on Sundays, they go to a reception, and they keep up their parties in June. The truth is, there is scarcely more frivolity in New York society than in any other ; the diary of a person of fashion in Fielding's days would

answer for one now; the fine gentleman in Joseph Andrews killed time nearly in the same manner as his modern rival in the new world; and though Addison's *Clorindas* and *Coquetillas* received in bed, and wore patches, both which modes are just now out of vogue, they crowded to the play as ours do to the opera, and wore hoops and fluttered fans exactly in the style that is to-day all the rage. Not only in passing fashions, however, can resemblances be traced, but the topics of conversation, the matter as well as the manner, remains the same. English folk of consideration, according to Thackeray, slander their neighbors, and discuss their dearest friends with as much freedom as is ever known in New York drawing-rooms; and if you believe De Sévigné, the marquises of Louis XIV.'s time were as devoted to dress, and lived as much with the senses and for the senses, as the shallowest of the newest people up town.

And it must be always so. You cannot expect very profound remarks at a ball. In a room full of people, where you know fifty, there is neither time nor opportunity to do more than emulate *Belinda* in the "Rape of the Lock," or *Flutter*, in the play. If the Vagabond should meet *Norah* at a German, and begin discussing pictures or the characteristics of woman, while she was waiting her turn in the dance, she would certainly consider him a stupid vagabond, and wish him as far off as the picture gallery at least. I have heard the finest scholars and the profoundest men of the country talk some of the most delightful nonsense imaginable; gossip with a charmer about the probabilities of a new opera, and even spice a little scandal into their talk of

the latest marriage *à la mode*, or the next fortune to be thrown into the market. And I thought they showed their good sense. He who prosed in the *entr'actes* of an opera or a quadrille, who discusses phrenology, as I have heard some, at a supper table, or introduces disquisitions on tragedy between the morceaux of the amateurs, may be very wise and very learned, but he scarcely shows his taste in the same degree with his learning.

Then the chatter and gossip are positively agreeable. One likes to hear who next is to be married, and who last was rejected ; to talk over the last party, with its *contretemps*, the merits of the dancers, and the mistakes of the singers. I, at any rate, relish a little raillery ; I prefer a visit to people who, having eyes, see what is going on around them ; who spy out the ridiculous and laugh at it ; who can criticise their friends without abusing them, and censure their follies, yet own all their merits. I make no doubt that I take my turn ; when I leave a delightful place where we have canvassed our entire acquaintance, and found something severe to say of each, I feel like Sir Peter Teazle, that I'd better take my character with me ; it isn't safe from inspection if left behind. But if they treat me well to my face, why not be content ? At any rate, whether I am or not, matters little ; my fate is the same. My friends discuss me ; the world will talk ; they say how poorly I dance, or how stiffly I bow ; what a queer coat that was ; how he blushed when Norah was talking ; how angry he was because she went in to supper with somebody else. Let them talk, so long as they don't absolutely abuse me ; I take my share with the rest, and I assure them, I have my revenge, in kind.

There's one charming house where I'm always sure of a feast; where wit and personality make the talk so piquant, that I am content to sit by as a listener; only when the subject is fairly exhausted I start another, as you poke up the fire that is burning too low. There I always stay too long in the morning, and go too often in the evening; there I never send a regret, and am always provoked to be left out; and there the talk is not often heavy; it is refined, and even, after a fashion, intellectual; that is, it is frivolous, but the frivolity is such as only intellectual people are capable of; trifles are handled by those masters of the art of handling them, and, like a French soup, made out of the Lord knows what, your entertainment is delightful and piquant, and tempting enough to the most sated appetite, but not too heavy to interfere with a digestion of the substantial viands that may be in store.

But I did not intend to ramble off into a dissertation on fashionable small-talk; parties are my theme to-day. Conversation belongs to visits; the theatre and the picture-gallery are the places for intellectual gratification; operas and parties are social occasions where seeing and being seen, meeting those you know, and using your eyes, are the principal objects. Music and dancing, of course, and supper, must not be forgotten; they contribute to the sum total; but what people go for is not for these. At any rate, the opera for the music, the ball for dancing, but a dinner is the only opportunity for enjoying the pleasures of the table. What justice can be done to a *pâté de foie gras*, standing! How can you possibly appreciate Clos Vougeot as you swallow down a glass hastily between handing ices to Norah



and salad to X.! You might even confound the wines, and in your hurry take Hock for Heidsieck, or pour out Chablis into a champagne glass. Those who understand these things, never attempt to indulge under such circumstances; a deliberate dinner is the occasion for the delights of taste, or a game supper, if you will; a wedding collation, or a stand-up supper after a dance, may be desirable as refreshment, but the connoisseurs spurn them. This reminds me that I do not share in the supreme contempt entertained by some for an epicure. Every other sense is cultivated to a high degree of perfection; we pique ourselves upon the acuteness of the ear, upon the correctness of the eye, why not educate the palate as well? Why not enjoy in their perfection the subordinate tastes? They are more animal indeed; but man is part animal, and may as well drain every drop of pleasure in his cup, all the juice from the orange, all the honey from the flower. I am not too ethereal to relish a wine or a *pâté* with considerable zest; I can even understand the wish of Lucullus, for a neck as long as a crane's, that he might protract the savoring of his dainties; and I don't think the opera less exquisite to me, or the play less entrancing, the picture less beautiful, or the book less absorbing, because I appreciate purely physical delights of a gustatory description. All things, I believe, were given us richly to enjoy. What is coarse let us refine, what is good, extract. Goethe's philosophy was not so bad as it is the fashion now to say: self-culture in all things is a very good aim, and self-denial, without some ulterior object to be attained—I know nothing of.

But the parties. They may be divided into balls, con-

certs, literary receptions, and weddings. The first have been known the world over, and will last for ever. Philosophers and old fogies may declaim as much as they please, but the young will dance—young New York especially. The women will say he dances like an angel, and dancing men will be invited, no matter how great noodles they be; the men will gaze with rapture at the exquisite grace of the fair divinities as they whirl in the maze; while the lucky ones that whirl—who shall describe their pleasure? Not I. Young New York is celebrated for the excellence of its dancing. Mr. Bristed long ago made famous the rage for the polka in Fraser's Magazine; and that waltz, so ugly to look at, so delightful to engage in, has stood its ground against all the moralists for a decade. Those who are left out are apt to say that the servants of Terpsichore could worship at no other shrine; can dance but not talk. And indeed there are those who acquire great proficiency in this accomplishment, but are not good for much else. Some dames are glad, they say, to have dancing and bowing acquaintances, people whom they like to meet at the opera or on the promenade, whom they are delighted to polk with, but are sure to be not at home if they call. They find a waltz very agreeable in such company, but could not endure a visit. But if you think all the good dancers are fools, my friend, you are greatly mistaken. Some of the most brilliant people dance superbly; the superiority they manifest in one thing is conspicuous in all.

But why will they dance the German? Of all the interminable and inextricable inventions that ever were known, the German bears the palm. And they dance

it with so much gusto; from nine to one without a respite, not stopping for supper, and then not getting through; not approaching the end of those three hundred figures. There is indeed a vague tradition that the German cotillion was once danced through by a set as indefatigable as the dervishes of the east in their saltatory devotions; but some enterprising youth forthwith invented new figures, and when the band thought themselves arrived at a termination, Alps upon Alps arose. Those who dance this, do well to seclude themselves, to give German parties where nothing else is done; for to lookers-on at Vienna, to those who fear to trust themselves in the never-ending maze, to get down on their knees among the hoops, to wave banners in the eyes of the fair, to waltz with chairs for partners, to dance under a *nom de plume*—to those who eschew all this, 'tis weary enough. But the German has the stamp of the highest fashion; it is not known or practised outside of exclusive circles, and until it reaches others, it will be the rage. If the Lanciers could be introduced, I am sure that would be preferable. True, it is not so difficult, and does not so completely taboo those who do not essay it; but the gay world need not hope to keep its favorite long to itself; all its modes are imitated, and the outsiders will take even the pains of learning the German for the sake of doing as the Germans do. And when outsiders learn that dance, the others will abandon it. Speed the day!

I have scarce left myself room to talk of the private concerts, which, however, I have already discussed when telling of the amateurs; of the weddings which, sooth to say, are dull; I admit all that the spitefulest

old maid can say of them: five young women in a row, simpering and saying the same fine things to five hundred people; five young men for ever going back and forth like a pendulum between the door and the bride; five hundred people puffing and perspiring—constitute a wedding. Music and a table of presents, and a table of another sort, provide some sort of recreation; but every wedding is like every other one; two people are made happy and half a thousand miserable. Literary soirées, reading parties, private theatricals, tableaux, furnish too large a field to enter upon at the end of a paper. Besides, it is June, and the day for these things is gone by. Society is like the auctioneer's hammer—going—going—going out of town. The Vagabond must leave his P. P. C.'s.

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## THE BALLET.

“When you do dance, I wish you  
A wave o’ the sea, that you might ever do  
Nothing but that.”

*Winter’s Tale.*

THE drama sprang from the dance, and religion has not, in all ages, disdained the aid of dancing men and dancing women. Many are wont to call the ballet the last and most artificial refinement of modern civilization; the very highest intoxication of pleasure; the rarest spice in the cup, the maddest flavor in the wine of those to whom all other fascinations have palled. But though it may be and often is, as seductive as any of the delights of sense, it is far from being one peculiar to the nineteenth century, or to European culture and tastes. The choruses that Æschylus trained for the stage, the satyric dance, or, earlier yet, the original worship of Bacchus, when women remarkable for beauty and grace celebrated the rites sacred to the god of wine and mirth, bear witness to the early passion for this amusement—a passion that must be instinctive with the race, since it has appeared alike among the classic nations of antiquity, in the barbaric splendors of oriental harems, and amid the elaborate elegance of the Parisian opera.

The Greek chorus was similar in many things to the modern ballet; the measured movement common in temple and theatre among the most careful students of art and pleasure in the ancient world, was not only the germ of tragedy, and so of all the great productions of Sophocles and Shakspeare, but itself a form of the same amusement which, to-day, after the lapse of thirty centuries, entrances crowds in the capital of the new world. How ineradicable must be the instinct that prompted the sacred dances in the groves of Athens, that delighted the king of Judea till he sacrificed the head of a saint to the whim of a girl, that fascinated the Howadji as he journeyed on the banks of the Nile, and now excites a dollar-loving people to ecstasy as they gaze on the faultless form and bewitching grace of a foreign woman. Mankind is the same under all climes and all circumstances. I like to fancy that I share the pleasures of the gay and intellectual Athenian; to know that what delighted Alcibiades affords me gratification; that the dwellers in the luxury of a Sardanapalus revelled in no more exquisite "lusts of the eye," than are now afforded to an American on the shore of that land not long ago rescued from the clutch of the red man.

Some, I know, declare the ballet unnatural and awkward. We all have read Carlyle's scathing criticism of the stage dance; we all have heard our acquaintances dilate upon the absurdity of a woman sticking her leg up in the air, or walking on her toes. And, of course, as long as you talk of the ballet, you can ridicule it. It is in some respects unnatural; its artists are often awkward; and those who have no susceptibility to the fascinations of form and color and motion may, very likely,

look on in amazement at what shall excite an uproar of applause in the theatre. Still, it is impossible that an amusement which has been found to possess such charms for the universal race, which is enjoyed alike by the wild savages of Otaheite and the most polished nations of modern times, which boasts to-day its triumphs in every capital in the world, which attracts crowds of those best versed in pleasure and most learned in art—it is impossible that this should not have a basis somewhere in our nature. Its universality proves its naturalness. And even in the abstract, there is something to be said for it. It appeals to sense and feeling and taste. It is, indeed, like the opera, ridiculous if looked at logically; nobody imagines that any dying Edgardo or Violetta would sing their souls away in strains like the *Bel alma* or *Gran Dio*; nobody imagines that the legitimate expression of female passion is whirling around on one leg, and flinging the other round the neck of a man. But for all that, the strains of “Lucia” and the “Traviata” do ravish and move the listeners; for all that, the action of Cerito and the grace of Carlotta Grisi set men’s brains on fire. There is expression in the dance, there is meaning in the pantomime, there is soul in the ballet. Passion and sentiment and feeling are expressed not only in the eye and face, not only in the lithe form and exquisitely moulded limbs of beauty, but in the graceful motions and fascinating positions of the dance. Who that has seen the touching story of The Willies unfolded by Caroline Rousset, that has watched her floating, sylph-like gestures and delicate movements, but will acknowledge the capabilities of the stage dance. Who that has been fired by the abandon and wild gipsy spirit

of the Spanish Soto, but can tell of the delights of the ballet?

The *furor* created by a new *début*, the hats, and gloves, and flowers and diamonds showered on Rolla last Monday, the crowded theatres and prodigious applause that have rewarded her exertions since, remind me of the triumphs of her predecessors, recall the days of other dancers now, alas! grown stiff and old. I can just remember the sensation created by Elssler; I know how the young men went mad, and the young women got jealous; how the Park theatre was crowded nightly with the fashion and beauty of the town; how they said the appearance of the divine Fanny was a new revelation; how they talked of the antique statues inspired into motion; how the greatest prudes took boxes, and the oldest fogies raved. But I could not then appreciate the excellences of the ballet: a third-rate dancer would have pleased me as well as the incomparable gyrations that have never since been equalled in America. Probably my brain would have been turned by Augusta as well as by Elssler; the whirl of one's legs would have made me giddy as quickly as the "Tarantula" of the other. I probably liked to see the performances of the Miss Madelines and Miss Adelines, the Ducys and Lucys who filled up the *entr'actes*. The sparse allowance of petticoats undoubtedly excited my curiosity, and the sight of a woman's calf, covered only with flesh-colored hose, made my boyish blood run fast, though the steps its owner took were heavy and slow. However, custom blunts the edge of everything, and I got used to sights of this description. After having stood behind the scenes talk-



ing to a ballet-girl while she chalked her shoes, and gone home with a bevy to supper all in their stage dresses, one isn't particularly interested in the performance as seen from the other side of the footlights. I confess I was a little fluttered the first time a pretty woman came into the *coulisse* and held out her foot to me instead of her hand; but I soon got ready to take it, and now feet and hands are all alike, so that I don't have to furnish gloves and hose. The mystery is half the charm; and when there was no mystery to me about these women, when I saw the ballet-master scold them at rehearsal, and observed their efforts in the morning to do what was to bring down the house in the evening, when I noticed the red and white chalk, the false eyelashes and the hired bouquets, there was no more enchantment. Then I longed for good dancing; then I discovered that Malvina's shape was bad, and Aldina's legs were long; that one had big feet, and another moved heavily; that this one was too stout, and the other so awkward; then I waited for the Avatar of a new divinity.

The Roussets, I think, came first after Elssler. The four sisters made an impression. Lecompte and Celeste and Augusta had been forgotten, and many who crowded to Niblo's to see "Catarina," had never witnessed such dancing before. Then Adelaide, in her male attire, was very bewitching; and though Caroline was homely, and her form not so exquisite as many that I have seen since, she was yet a fine dancer—she was *spirituel* and delicate, more at home as Giselle than as "La Reine des Bandits;" and though she led the evolutions of her military corps with skill and grace, though she danced

the Manola with Adelaide with considerable spirit, her forte was rather in the waving, floating style; she looked a very Giselle; she seemed at times to have both feet off the stage, to be buoyed up in the air, so gracefully, so gradually, so exquisitely she moved. That excrescence of the ballet, a male dancer, was always got rid of in their performances—the male dancers, who do nothing but spin around, till you wonder whether they will ever have done, and especially if they can ever get unwound again.

Pougand and Soto came together: fair examples of the French and Spanish styles; the one all art, the other all fire; the one seductive, the other inspiring; Pougand, finished, and careful, and immodest and cold, displaying her talent, making great efforts and superb *poses*, accomplishing whatever she aimed at, but doing it all for effect, and simpering and smirking for applause; Soto, brimful of Andalusian animation, enthusiastic in her nature and passionate in her movements, whirling round in a perfect abandon, and whirling her audience invariably along with her, by far the most exciting dancer that I have ever seen. Too heavy to attempt the great achievements of her rival, not so lithe as many, and even lacking precision and *aplomb*, she yet flung her whole soul so into the dance, she so identified herself and her nationality with what she was about, that none could resist the *entrainement*. To see her come down the stage in the Manola, the very sound of the music of which is inspiring and exciting—to see her bright black eyes flash, and her Spanish blood mount into her cheek, as she whirled her body and flung her arms, and leaned nearly level with the stage, was a

sight that always made the house ring again. I have known the pit brought to their feet more than once by this dance. Pougaud's *chef d'œuvre* was the incantation scene in "Robert le Diable;" the enchantments of the wicked abbess, the unearthly wiles to lead a man to ruin, were the very ones her talent was fitted to portray. The insinuating grace, the seductive smile and action of Helena, have never been better given in New York than by Pougaud. I never wondered that Robert succumbed to such fascinations; it would have been unmanly to resist.

Mathias, the exquisite pantomimist, the pretty Russian, never made so great a sensation as she ought to have done; and Teresa Robert, the most perfect dancer of the French school that has ever been in New York, with the most faultlessly-formed limbs and the ugliest face imaginable, was not appreciated. They each drew immensely at first; the town talked of them for a week; everybody went to see them; and then they were no more thought of than if they had been second-rate. Whether Rolla will share their fate, remains to be seen. She is prettier than most of her predecessors; she is well shaped; she is refined and interesting; she is full of expression in face and form; her dancing all has meaning, but she does no wonders in her art. Her *tours de force* are not equal to Robert's, and she has not the fire of Soto; her charm consists in the exquisite and delicate expression of her dancing, in her little steps, and in her personal attractions.

We don't have the grand ballet here yet, in the style in which it is given abroad. The principal artistes are excellent, but we want Cerito and Carlotta Grisi; and

more than that, we want the superlative splendors of the Parisian theatres. The ballet needs every adjunct of music and scenery. All sensual pleasures harmonize with it; elaborate and gorgeous colors, troops of beautiful women, music more exciting than we get away from the opera; something on a grander scale than we have yet had here. The *Pas des Patineurs*, in "Le Prophète," the ballet of "Guillaume Tell," as these were produced at the Academy of Music, give some idea of what I mean. When we have saltatory performances of this description, combined with the greatest artists in the world, as they say we shall have next winter, the ballet will not lose its charms in a month, nor a dancer grow stale in her prime.

## THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN.

“ Look here upon this picture, and on this.”

*Hamlet.*

WHOEVER has read “Jane Eyre” (and who has not?) will remember the vivid description of the drawings that Rochester found in the portfolio of the homely little governess; the wonderful character of those sketches; the immense feeling that struggled for expression in lines and colors till it was spoken as plainly as in words. The same idea of painting which prompted these, was common to the entire Brontë family; Mrs. Gaskell tells of the three purblind sisters, full of pent-up genius and character, poring over the few prints that fell in their way, and spelling out the meaning of the artist, guessing at the thoughts that originated his work, or deciphering the enigma veiled in his outlines. If Patrick Brontë had accomplished what he so wildly longed for, what he so wildly cried for in that wonderful letter to Wordsworth, which harrows up one’s heart to read: if he had made himself a name as an artist, it would, I dare say, have been as a man of feeling, as a painter full of power and meaning. The Brontës were right; all lonely in their Haworth parsonage, out of the way of art, they had learned art’s highest teachings

from her sister, nature; they had hit instinctively upon what some arrive not at, after years of labor and study—the knowledge that art is useless save as the utterance of thought, as the expression of feeling, as the embodiment of sentiment.

This is true of art in every one of its departments; elocution is not acting, so Mr. Wallack is infinitely inferior to young Booth in essentials; words are not poetry, so Pope, with all his cultivated numbers, is tame by comparison with the stammerings of Shelley; science is not music, and the elaborate learning of Mercadante, and sometimes of Mendelssohn, is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, to the melody that scintillates all through Verdi or Rossini. But in painting especially, the difference is eternal and the distance impassable between the true and its imitation. He who has nothing to say, no thought to utter, no feeling to express, may as well abandon his pallet and pencil. He may color and draw, he may elaborate with the painstaking fidelity of a Denner or a Mr. Hill, he may rival the effects of the daguerreotype, but he will give only the body without the soul. Without the inspiration which never is acquired, his color will be cold and his drawing stiff; or even if he counterfeit grace and warmth, the life, the breath, the spirit will be lacking. The statue will never speak to its Praxiteles; the fire will never be infused unless Prometheus steal it from the gods.

ALL that I look for in the Academy of Design is some trace of this fire; some spark, some show of feeling or of thought. The closest outside imitation without it affects me not, and one touch of nature gives me more pleasure than the most elaborate results of skill. I had rather

see even a misshapen creation like that of Frankenstein, grotesque and monstrous, but yet alive, than the finest of fantoccini or the best dressed wax doll. I discuss no technicalities, for general criticism should be general, not technical. The student of an art is expected to master its secrets and be acquainted with its details; but others, whatever interest they may feel in the subject, care for it only as it affects them and in its results; as an end, not as a means. The critic's function is to discuss the aim and object of art, not to descant upon the means by which that object is attained; to appreciate the beauties of a picture or a statue, to point out its faults, and impartially to discriminate between the true and the false, the beautiful and the plain; but it is the province of the professor to say how the form should be rounded and where the color should be laid on. Criticism for artists exclusively, may be concerned with the study, the practice, the efforts, the labor. Criticism in general is concerned with the result. But because a man does not understand how to compose an opera is no reason why he shall not appreciate its beauties; because I may draw worse than Ruskin says Claude Lorraine does, is not to say I cannot tell a line of enchanting grace when I see it.

The present exhibition at the Academy is an encouraging one; there is more excellence than I have noted in any of its collections for a number of years. More of the portraits have character, more of the landscapes reflect the spirit of nature. And of all in the galleries, that which is the fullest of feeling, at once the truest to externals, and the most instinct with expression—perhaps the most instinct with expression because the truest

to externals—is Mr. Church's "Andes of Ecuador." His recent works place this artist at the head of American landscape painters; and it is as landscape painters only that our artists have yet achieved any place; it is in landscapes only that they have succeeded in caging any of the indefinable, subtle something we call genius; in landscapes only that ideas are embodied; by them only that impressions, sentiments, feelings are conveyed. American portraits are not often portraits of men and women, but of faces and gowns—features without soul, complexion without character. Our historical works are attempts, not achievements; showing an ambition which, alas! is worth nothing without the ability. Anybody may aim, but how few attain. Pretentious efforts after greatness, denominated historical pictures, bare or tawdry in conception, crude and stupid in execution, are not redeemed because their authors wanted to excel. It is hard of course for them that they did not, but they are damned nevertheless. Aim cannot be accepted for accomplishment: indeed, without the latter, it only makes a man ridiculous; and such, sooth to say, are too many historical painters. Convinced of this, they have of late eschewed the branch of art in which no excellence seems likely soon to be attained by Americans.

But in landscapes the sky is brighter; there is ample field; there is inspiring theme; there is nature fresh and young as ever, but doubly new and fresh to those who seek her in the new world. The Andes and the Niagara are fitting themes for an American artist, and have been fitly handled by Mr. Church. Who that stands before the picture I speak of, and gazes at the



magnificent prospect, the lofty ranges, the distant outline melting into the clouds, the hazy peaks, the shimmering sun of the tropics, the gorgeous-tinted earth and sky, but must acknowledge that the artist has caught and conveyed a new feeling to the mind. His canvas lives. You forget to discuss the admirable perspective; the curious manner in which the foreground is made to contribute to the general effect; the mystery of tone which is hung over the picture like a curtain, subduing and mellowing every tint to a subordinate effect; the exquisite drawing of the hills, reminding you of Ruskin's simile of rocks like ribs clothed in living flesh, and swelling beneath the life-like garment—all these are lost in the general effect. Some quarrel with Mr. Church that he makes everything subordinate to effect: that is, that soul is more to him than body; but not so I. His pictures speak their meaning, have an influence, excite feelings, and even if sometimes his skies are impossible, or his foliage untrue, if he daguerreotypes not, gives no fac-simile of nature, his works yet answer the higher purpose of awakening the same emotion which the sight of the landscape itself would inspire. This is art's noblest, truest function; not to imitate nature, but to rival it.

Mr. Durand is worthily represented, although his productions are scarcely as much individualized as usual; for sometimes they are individualized to such a degree as to be just on this side of mannerisms, but on this side still. He looks not at nature in the wilder, warmer aspects that most strike his younger peer. He wants quiet, refreshing glimpses; June-like views, graceful elm trees, browsing cattle, gentle streams; but he as

truly mirrors nature. He catches another phase quite as successfully; he sees her not in so imposing a garb; he is not like Moses, who looked on God unveiled; he enters not the holy of holies barefoot; but he is a true worshipper at the shrine. He cannot paint a storm without sunlight breaking through clouds, but he exerts a delicious calming influence; he soothes perturbed spirits; he, too, is a real artist. •

Kensett is the other member of the trinity of landscape painters who excel all their brethren in this department. He is not so sumptuous in his tastes as Church, nor so like Goldsmith in his influence as Durand. He chooses not to portray the tropical atmosphere nor the peculiarities of autumnal glories; he is affected not by placid lakes and softened hills; he prefers wildness, but not the very wildness of Niagara; a White Mountain view, with rough, precipitous sides, and scraggy rocks and stunted foliage, with black looking tarns and racing torrents, a real American view. His masterpiece of last year was, however, finer than his best picture in the present exhibition. There was about it the same unity of feeling, the same harmony of conception, the same originality of treatment, and an apparently keener appreciation of the spirit of the place. A still greater seclusion appeared to pervade the scene, a still fresher coolness was in those woods, a blacker shade hung over the pool. He is perhaps quite as essentially American in his landscapes as either of the other two great artists who lead the van.

Mr. Grey is the first of our colorists. His pictures all have a magical influence on me; they leave a deep impression; they strike me instantly and unmistakably.

He is called a mannerist, an imitator of old painters; but, if it is imitation, it is such as no countryman of his can equal. If it is a mannerism it is full of character. He is not pretty in treatment, but effective; he understands tone, not as if taught, but as if inspired. What he does is not the result of labor, or others would share in his success. He has great merits in drawing also, but lacks, sadly lacks, expression. His "Hagar" is full of beauties of tone, is nicely drawn—sometimes charmingly—but it might nearly as well be a "Sarah" as a "Hagar." His portraits are rather types of a class than absolute individualities. He is excelled in this respect by Elliott and Huntingdon, who give us the man—especially wherein he differs from others. They discern what makes a man himself, what constitutes character; they have the rare faculty of peering through the countenance into lines that lie deeper than features, and it is these lines that they reproduce on canvas. This makes their portraits, portraits; this sets them so far above others who attempt the same thing.

Many of the other pictures have merit, but it is useless to catalogue them here; I only attempt to say when one seems to me to rise far above the mass. I find much that interests me not; but, on the whole, good cause for encouragement; no reason to retract what I said two weeks ago of an onward movement in American art. The three landscapes of Church, Durand, and Kensett are alone enough to assure me that there is reason for congratulation.

## CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

"Be that you are;  
That is, a woman."

*Measure for Measure.*

It is now ten years since "Jane Eyre" was given to the world; but who does not remember the marvellous success of that marvellous production? Who does not still more distinctly remember its effect upon himself? For it is a work of genius; it is one of those things that speak direct to the individual; that penetrate through all swaddlings of circumstance and education; that have a universal voice; that affect the innermost nature. High and low, rich and poor, old and young, illiterate and educated, were all touched; a chord was struck that vibrated in every heart. Since then other powerful books have come to us from the same pen; "Shirley" and "Villette" also were full of the wonderful influence, the magnetism of genius; bespoke the same intense nature that was revealed in their predecessor; awoke responsive emotions in bosoms whose throbs the world never knew of, in breasts all unused to answer to the play of these word-magicians. Then came the first few intimations that the public got of the personality of the great writer; her name, her age, her residence, and at last a voice in her own proper charac-

ter—the preface to her sister's works. In this spoke out again the compressed feeling which had been the secret of "Jane Eyre's" power. However, only a few words were said; and soon after followed the news that Charlotte Brontë was dead. Mrs. Gaskell's remarkable biography let us into the secrets of her character; told us the story of that lonely parsonage among the Yorkshire hills; described the three caged sisters, full of repressed genius and feeling, pent up in their little parlor at Haworth, pacing up and down like wild beasts eager to be free, and with emotions quite as restless as themselves raging within their breasts—as complete and sad a picture as exists in the history of English literature. And now, we have "The Professor," Charlotte's first work, and yet her last, coming to us with a peculiar interest since we have studied the character of its writer; a book which read by the light the biography throws across its pages is full of as strange significance as any in the language.

All of Charlotte Brontë's books are full of personality. The author looked into her own heart, and portrayed what she saw, and felt, and was; you believe in the reality of what she says, and therefore acknowledge her sway. One got to know much of her from her works, before the biography revealed her innermost nature. But when that singular production displayed the entire and uneventful career of Currer Bell; when it laid bare her every feeling and thought; when it disclosed the most secret recesses of her character, we seemed admitted to a confidence generally bestowed only on the nearest and dearest of friends. "The Professor," however, goes even a step beyond; you can

know the woman now even as she knew herself; secrets are betrayed in this book, secrets of feeling, and thought, and passion, that none ever disclose to any friend. The veil is torn away from the most private and sacred parts of her nature; everything is uncovered to the glaring light of publicity; every stranger can rudely venture in and trace the growth of character, can watch the throbs of passion, the development of ideas in a being so strangely sensitive, so morbidly inclined to shrink from just this gaze. I feel, in reading "The Professor," as if I were intruding where I had no right to be. You absolutely know the woman better than she could herself. You can say what incident in her real life suggested this fictitious circumstance; what throb prompted this burning line; what nerve, touched to the quick, started these words that speak and flash so vividly. And she, Charlotte Brontë, the reserved, undemonstrative woman, who kept her feelings and her passions pent up and hidden, she to have her very soul torn quivering from her almost before she is cold, and exposed, panting and bleeding, to the curiosity of the multitude! They were strange friends who had such ideas of the duties of friends.

And yet the fascination in the nature of the woman, and in her genius, the magnetic influence of human sympathy, will not let me turn away. Since those whose duty it was to decently close the eyes of the dead and bury her quietly, have chosen to strip off the shroud, and offer her form to the dissecting-knife, why should we hesitate to learn a lesson of human nature thus thrust upon us? Let us approach reverently as is due to the genius, delicately as befits the sex, truthfully as

befits the nature of her of whom I speak. Could I catch the spirit that animated Charlotte Brontë—that earnest, honest spirit—though her surpassing power of course would dazzle, that spirit might animate me, and help me to do her a measure of justice.

The womanliness of Charlotte Brontë first strikes me in everything that she has written; the depth of womanly feeling; the height of womanly passion; the way in which she has put herself into her books, little suspecting that a key should afterwards be offered to the world which would unlock every mystery she chose to hint at in her words. The revelation of character is marvellous. The tenderer feminine traits are not so manifest, but the earnest ones of woman are all developed: the clinging with the whole soul around what she loves; the eager reception of a passion; the absorption of it into her nature; the identification of herself with its object—in a word, what constitutes the truest and noblest part of the truest and noblest woman. Demonstrations are not common, are not lavished openly and freely: the first indications of any passions are repressed, confidence is not sought, but the tremendous force, the cataract of feeling at last sweeps everything before it, and rises to the heights of the loftiest tragedy. This I call one phase of woman's character. There are those who lack the softer traits; who bestow not tears and kisses daily and nightly; who have none of the youthful exuberance of Juliet; who sternly repress what emotions sprout up, but who, in the whirlwind of passion, are all the more terrible from their usual calm; who hide under equable exteriors, under the crust of quiet, a very volcano of feeling; and such a woman

Jane Eyre was painted, such a woman is everywhere developed in the works of Currer Bell, such a woman was Charlotte Brontë.

For she nowhere creates; she had not, in so great a degree as the world has thought, the inventive faculty; she transcribes herself, her own emotions, her own feelings, and ideas; she pecks at her own breast for the life-blood that warms her productions; she clothes with living flesh not the figures of her fancy, but those that stood out in her memory. Here again I discern the woman; man creates, woman receives; one makes impressions, the other retains them; and even this wonderful genius is true to her womanly nature. She has none of the Shakspearean faculty, none of the universality of Goethe; she does not beget a varied crowd of characters; she does not speak into existence those whose identity is for ever established, and whose variety is as remarkable as their actuality. It is a few homogeneous beings that she sets before us, all having the same characteristics, the same intensity, the same depth of character, the same tendency to repress emotions, the same outwardly-forbidding aspect, the same condensed, crowded feeling, the same power which she found and felt in herself. Rochester and Jane Eyre are the same being—different phases of Charlotte Brontë; her personality is what gives them life. And the after books are still repetitions, each one weaker than the last (the woman again); she had crowded herself into one effort; she had expended the intensity of her nature in the one burst. You heard the cry and your heart re-echoed it; you felt the shock and your own nerves answered; you acknowledge all the wonderful passion and genius of the



woman, but what more has she done since than she did then?

And not only does she not create characters, not only does she copy from herself the most important individuals of her works, and from her own family or the few she met in boarding schools, the supernumeraries of her little stage; but even her events and plots are, in a great measure, transcripts of real life. Doubtless, they are only the more real for this: incidents are given exactly as they occurred; scenery is described till it is mirrored before you; language is repeated exactly as it fell from the lips of her friends. Of course this power of reproducing is prodigious, is what accounts for the great effect of Charlotte Brontë's writings, but it is a distinct and separate thing from that other and higher power, possessed only by a chosen few, of creation.

She exhibits only that phase of life which she had seen; she attempts no imaginative writing; she portrays with the faithfulness of a Dutch painter the scenes in which she had mingled; she sets down like Denner every hair, and those who have been thus daguerreotyped complain of the forbidding truthfulness which points them out after the lapse of twenty years as her originals. Not mere daguerreotypes though, for Charlotte Brontë's pictures are all instinct with life, all full of feeling, all teem with suggestiveness.

The closest observation of character in her is combined with the most searching analysis of motives; she has the faculty of seeing straight through all disguises to the very core of things; she penetrates to the reality. The most retentive memory of events does not interfere with the ability to discover the significance of those

events; and though her sphere is narrow, within it she is absolute master. She rings the changes in a mournful key, and on one instrument; she breathes always the same sad strain, now fierce and frantic in its earnestness, now more terrible because repressed, now only intimating the concealed depths behind—but with all the monotony there is tremendous power. The sadness again, is womanly; the consciousness of power is in her ever attended by the sombre feeling of fate; her novels are almost like the Greek tragedy in this respect; her novels and her life are both for ever under this pall. Even in the wild exultation of *Jane Eyre*, you feel the foreboding of coming sorrow, and the chastened joy at the close of her career is surely such as men are not apt to be content with.

The intensity of feeling everywhere evinced in the works of Charlotte Brontë is allied to a degree of coarseness; the rush of emotions crushes out delicacy; tenderness even is forgotten when a master passion seizes hold of the soul. And I confess these novels have always seemed to me such as a woman of great refinement could not have written. There is a certain coarseness of feeling everywhere evident; not surprising in one educated under the influences that surrounded the Brontë family, but which was besides instinctive in them. No woman of great delicacy could do or describe things that Miss Brontë describes her heroines as doing. The very abruptness and intensity of her characters are not of the sort common in a society used to a polish always in some measure deceitful. I do not, however, here allude to formal refinements, but to absolute and innate delicacy, which was, in some degree, lacking

in Charlotte Brontë's character. In fact, her womanliness was of a peculiar sort: it wanted some features which are commonly thought indispensable to true womanliness. It was a type of an uncommon kind, but it was womanly, after all, rather than manly.

I shall not now discuss the literary merits of her works. What need to dwell on the compressed energy of her style; upon her terse, forcible prose; upon the way in which character is again mirrored here; upon the absence of useless ornament; upon the significance she gives to natural scenery; upon the life-likeness of her dialogue, and the magnificent vividness of her descriptions. These, of course, were the means through which her genius got expression; but I trench not now on the province of those who criticise the writer, I rather attempt to say what I think of the woman; to tell my idea of her character. All artists, of course, display themselves in their works; but in Charlotte Brontë, character and genius were so nearly allied as to become almost identical; you could not say where one ceased and the other began; you could not tell which it was that affected you; you only knew the effect. You marvelled at the insight into character, at the penetration that discovered, and the skill that portrayed motives; you yielded to the sway of the hand that was placed beneath your heart and gathered up the strings to wrench them; you submitted to the sympathetic influence, and forgetting to criticise, became the willing subject of a magnetism more subtle at once and more powerful than any known to magicians or mesmerisers. You bowed to the mysterious supremacy of genius; and cried out—"This is the finger of God."

## MY UNKNOWN CORRESPONDENTS.

"My gentle, bashful Nora Creina."

*Moore's Irish Melodies.*

MR. WILLIS and Bayard Taylor have their unknown correspondents, and why should not I? The younger poet is just married, and announces to the world that he is bored by these missives that come to him during his honeymoon, he knows not whence. Mr. Willis, however, is older, and don't get so much admiration expressed to his face (I suppose) as Bayard, so he says: "Write away, my darlings; I prize your appreciation." *Et moi aussi.* If the women will write, I will read, I promise. And they do write. Every once in a while I get a letter directed to "The Vagabond"—sometimes graceful, sometimes flattering, sometimes caustic, sometimes saucy, always piquant. Somebody who read my enthusiastic praise of young Booth's beauty, was sure it was written by a woman; but you couldn't persuade my fair correspondents of this. Do you think they'd waste thoughts and paper on one of their own sex? What piquancy in that, pray? So they keep up a running fire of letters, the most curious imaginable; so curious, that I cannot for the life of me resist the temptation to unfold a little history concerning them for the edification of my choicest friends—the very select few

who read "The Vagabond." The first of these communications came to me a year ago. Here it is:—

"NEW YORK, 17th March.

"MY DEAR VAGABOND: Why do not you—who speak of Painting as though you really knew something about it—no small praise nowadays, why do not you make a visit to a few of our New York studios, and criticise some of the paintings therein contained?—There is a sad dearth just now of art criticism—that is, so far as the pencil and brush are concerned—and the task of filling the vacuum cannot possibly fall into better hands than yours, my dear 'Vagabond,' for your article in last week's *Times* proves that you not only possess the judgment necessary to pick out the faults in a work of Art and censure them, but that you have the rarer faculty of discovering its beauties, and can generously praise *them also*. Therefore it is that I like *you*" (delightful creature!) "and your criticisms. Can I say more to induce you to accede to my wishes? If so, let me know what and presto! it is said. Seriously though will you not oblige me? There are certain Artists" (the capitals are my correspondent's) "in this City in whom I am interested and certain pictures which in my poor judgment deserve notice, and I *should* like to see them praised; but I have not the knowledge necessary to write a good Art Critique, and you apparently have" (who wouldn't he a "Vagabond?"), "therefore sorely pressed as was ever fair maiden of olden time I appeal to your chivalry to aid me. Can you refuse?"

Could I? Could *you*? Then follows a list of the artists and their works, and their studios; after which my correspondent proceeds:

"Have I failed in tempting you sufficiently, and in failing have I also betrayed which of these gentlemen it is that I am desirous should possess your good opinion? I hope not with all my heart, and trust that *yours* will not permit you to refuse me, then like all the rest of the world, I shall not only sing the 'Vagabond's' praises, but thank him *heartily too*.

"NORAH."

I beg my readers to observe the profusion of italicised words and the scarcity of commas, together furnishing incontestable proof of the sex of Norah, if any were wanting after that eminently feminine letter. And is not the letter itself irresistible? It was to me. I sallied forth, visited every studio that Norah had designated, found the picture I fancied she was most interested in, wrote a criticism thereupon, and received a letter of thanks from the artist. Had I then been content, all would have been well; but I must needs write a "Vagabond" article, mentioning these facts, when instantly there came upon me a shower of letters, two of which I append. The first is from the indignant artist:—

"And must I ravel out  
My weaved up follies?"

"It appears I must, that is if such a piece of folly as mine can be raveled out, for while I simply wrote to thank you for what seemed to be a disinterested love of Art and its progress, I was egregiously fooled and find from your own statement that your kindness was no kindness at all, but merely a desire to please an unknown correspondent who flattered *you* into flattering *me*.

"Whoever 'Norah' may be, I sincerely thank her for the interest *you* seem to think she takes in me and my pictures, but I very much regret the injustice you do me in attributing the matter of my letter of thanks to her thanks, which I regret you have left me no option but to recall."

Pleasant that—remarkably pleasant! I don't see why he need be so testy. What if I did go to his studio at Norah's suggestion? That didn't prevent my using my eyes when I got there. But the artist's letter is nothing compared to Norah's. Judge for yourselves:—

"Oh! you Prince of 'Vagabonds!' you *most* ungenerous of all ungenerous critics!" (what *will* she call me now, I wonder?—for of course I'll catch it after this article) "to blazon forth to thy hundred readers and *perforce* admirers" ('twas she underlined that *perforce*) "that I Norah, had written to thee!" (Tutoyant, eh!) "nay, to mention, and doubtless without a blush, too, the very subject of my letter. You vainest of mortals! to dream that my communication was dictated through admiration of thee," (I leave it to my readers if that wasn't a fair inference) "and not from interest in Art" (with a capital A) "and its professors. Henceforth the fabled Narcissus sinks into utter insignificance and oblivion, and on his once lofty pedestal, lo! the 'Vagabond' stands triumphant."

I suppose she thinks that's a fine sentence, but Narcissus didn't have any pedestal.

"So '*no one knows thy vanity?*' if you have indeed '*laid this flattering unction to your soul,*' discard it at once, and for ever, my dear Vagabond" (the hypocrite! *dear* indeed!) "*I know it, the readers of this journal are fully aware of it! The whole world knows of it. Why should it not?*" (I refrain from any remark.) "You have taken pains enough in all conscience, to convince us of its extent, nor in good sooth, do I blame thee much; the intellect of a Cicero"—

And here she becomes so utterly flagrant, so pert, so regardless of my feelings and of good taste, that I omit a passage. My readers lose nothing, I assure them.

"But who shall believe that you complied with my request, and wrote a criticism upon Art?" (She didn't ask for one on art; look at her first letter, and see if it was not on artists.) "Not I for one—for I searched every column of every newspaper in New York but no critique could I find, save and except one that bore not the slightest trace of having been penned by your illustrious hand; and had not my continued disappointments at length checked my extravagance, I should have finished by making the fortune of every Editor in the city

—but supposing for the sake of the argument that you visited certain studios and criticised certain pictures? what then? from your own confession, which I have in print, you did this to please Norah" (could I have had a better motive?) "and not oh! shame upon thee for a Vagabond" (she calls hard names, too, you perceive,) "not from the love of Art. I appealed to you to encourage art for its own sake, not for mine" (Oh!!!) "and I did this because I believed you to be fully capable of the task." (A little more truthful, just now.) "I imagined you to possess not only the necessary perception of the beautiful" (coming to her senses, rapidly,) "and I knew from experience that you could boast the noble faculty of speaking honestly your honest opinions—therefore I wrote," (a good reason,) "but had I for a moment dreamed that a few 'delicate flatteries and felicitious phrases' I quote from a distinguished personage who shall be nameless"—(she means me) "could have tempted you into flattering phrases in return, I never had addressed you." (Don't believe it.)

Then she preaches through two or three pages of letter paper about the mission of art; but after a while gets personal again:

"You quietly insinuate that you know Norah, although to her you are unknown. I deny both positions. I know the mask I wear is impervious to even your sharp eyes," (now, I'm near-sighted,) "and, moreover, I intend that it shall remain so! But I do not quietly insinuate that I know the 'Vagabond'—I boldly assert it! and, furthermore, that when in the gay saloon or crowded thoroughfare we meet, I re-adjust my mask, wrap close round me my mantle of invisibility, and pass on!

"So, secure for the present in my cloak of mystery, I hid the 'Vagabond' adieu! and defy him!"

There's a modest conclusion for you. Defy!—pretty language for a young woman; for I'm sure she's young. About her knowing me—I fancy she meets me in the "crowded thoroughfare" oftener than in the "gay



saloon." I confess I don't know her. She bade the "Vagabond" adieu! and in a fortnight I had another letter, rather more civil than the last, in regard to which I leave it to my readers to say whether it was not uncalled for. Didn't I do just as she desired, and did I deserve the storm of reproaches that she heaped on me? Letter No. 3 ends thus:

"What subject do you next intend your fertile pen shall embellish? I know one that you could dilate on admirably." (Ahem!) "Shall I suggest it? Yes? Well then 'the characteristics of American women as compared with those of other countries.' Hundreds of people have written upon this subject you will say, and I agree but then a greater number have written art criticisms and yet—you perceive," (Rather prettily put, that; the implied praise is so delicate :) "so I shall wait for the article, whether in vain or not the future must determine. I intended writing you an interesting letter and feel the pleasant consciousness of having failed, most lamentably—sometimes words will not come at my bidding, at another time my pen flows smoothly—as—as—the Vagabond's."

I admit she can turn a sentence neatly, and she certainly has some discrimination.

Next came a letter on pink paper, some time in June; 'twas just after I had discoursed about parties, and my unknown friend was angry because I defended small talk. She wrote better, and I imagine knows more, about pictures than parties. I burnt the letter; it contained no felicitous phraseology. The last communication came upon me after I had written about American belles. Norah seems to have an ideal of a belle, but the dear creature forgets how different the ideal is from the real:

"I had not intended writing to you again, and notwithstanding your last clever article upon Art matters, had thus far bravely kept

my resolution. Now, however, I have before me your last letter and after perusing it my indignation is so intense that I cannot if I would be silent. '*If you write snappishly or spitefully!*' It would be more to the purpose if you had said ungenerously and untruly—pardon my discourtesy, oh! most courteous of Vagabonds! but I repeat it *untruly*. If an American belle is the creature you describe her—then do I most devoutly thank Fortune that I am not the one, and that never in my wildest or vainest moods have I aspired to be the other." (Norah's rhetoric is evidently injured by the violence of her sentiments.)

"Yet I, too, love to look at a beautiful girl and can truly admire a brilliant one; and she to whom nature has given beauty and refinement, whose education has been such as to heighten and polish every natural gift, who can be grave or merry, earnest or playful as the occasion may require; can combine wit with delicacy; and who even in the most thoughtless moments forgets not her proper attribute of womanliness; who never let the temptation be what it may—o'ersteps the boundary line between brilliancy and boldness, and who utterly abhors—as should every woman, particularly when applied to her own sex—that hateful word *fast*—why such a one deserves to reign a very Queen among women and to look upon all mankind as her most devoted slaves."

Quite eloquent, Miss Norah; but proving that your ideas of society and belles are formed from books and your own fancy, not from contact with the originals; your picture is no type.

Doubtless I shall be inundated with letters next week; but I warn the dear creatures who expect to see themselves in print, that unless they are as clever as Norah, their expectations will be disappointed. And Norah must not be too furious at my liberties: she insists that I don't know her, so they are not liberties. She assumes to rate me for my follies: *eh bien!* I don't pretend to be free from follies; only it is usual in this world to discuss your acquaintance when their backs are turned. If

you do otherwise you take the consequences. I have another batch of letters from another fair one, who is even more pungent and decidedly better-natured than Norah; perhaps some fine morning I may open my budget again.

## THE COUNTRY.

“ 'A babbled of green fields.”

*Henry V.*

AND what should set one to babbling of green fields if not the heats of July? What should incline the sweltering denizen of the hot city to dream of thick shades and overhanging branches, of running streams and rustling gales, if not the blazing of the dog star and the sun that shimmers down so fiercely on streets and paving-stones? I know, indeed, that banished Bolingbroke cried out when John of Gaunt would have consoled him, he could not hold a fire in his hand by thinking of the frosty Caucasus: but is it always so, that apprehension of the good gives but the greater feeling to the worse? I fancy myself cooler as I recollect my bath of yesterday.

Not a bath in a tub, just my own length, and without room to turn over in, but a bath in the never-ceasing flow of a mighty river, whose tides daily and nightly are replenished from the inexhaustible ocean, and whose invigorating waves are fragrant and briny with the salt of the sea. After I reach a white, hard beach of sand, skirted by a wood and fringed with rocks, sufficiently secluded to allow an absolute return to the garb of Eden, or the nudity of a Grecian statue, “sans every-

thing," while I stand under the partial shelter of an ancient elm, and unrobe my heated limbs, how deliciously the breeze, gentle, almost imperceptible, but still delicious, dries up the dripping beads that course over my body! And then, alone with my shadow, and bare as at my birth, to walk out to the line whither the tenth wave comes, and let the water from frosty Greenland wet my feet, or the foam of a tide, borne perhaps from the South Pacific, dash against my legs! After standing a moment, gazing at the white caps and dancing feathers of the heaving, restless river, I plunge into a billow larger than the rest, and am enveloped in coolness as in a garment. I think of Undine, and reach out my arms to embrace a water-nymph. I wonder not that the old Norsemen were so often beguiled by dripping mermaids. I look down into the green, glassy depths, and expect to see the outskirts of a coral grove, or hear a song wafted upwards from the sea king's palace; and rolling, turning, over and over, round and round, in the liquid element, I fancy I feel the metamorphosis begin—I am myself becoming a sprite.

I am borne along over the surface, or just beneath it, gliding gently, but finding the motion at once exhilarating and voluptuous; a tingling sensation of pleasure extends along my whole frame. I am stronger for the exercise, and dash out faster; I get bolder as I swim, and stretch my feet towards the shore. I turn upon my back, and folding my arms, float for a while, looking up into the blue sky, and fancy myself suspended in mid-air, almost immaterial, almost flying. A moment ago, speeding along through the water like a dolphin, or a sea god in chase of a nymph, full of life, and my blood

coursing quickly, though coolly, through my veins ; now lying in one element and gazing into another, languidly, or at least luxuriously, borne on by the current. I think of Egeria, and Neptune, and Arethusa, and all the beautiful mythology of the sea, so much more exquisite, so much more *vraisemblable* than fairy lore of the land. I remember Teverino taken for a faun, and as I look at my own limbs, wonder whether I too might become a model. I never thought the human form so beautiful before ; I never thought myself a faun on shore ; but now I am no longer surprised that Adam and Eve went naked in the garden. I agree with the old Greeks and Winckelman, that nude statues only are tolerable.

A companion joins me in my frolic, and we return towards the shore ; then standing, half-covered by the tide, splash each other with storms of spray. A mimic battle ensues, till blinded by the snowy shower, each turns his back on the foe. We wrestle in the yielding element ; we call ourselves gymnasts of Spartan breed, or emulous of Olympic combatants, toss each other, and race, in the wave.

Think of all this, ye that endeavor to stretch your cramped limbs, and strike them against the tinned sides of a bath-tub ! How much poetry will recur to you as you squeeze the sponge over your shoulders ? Will you think of the ocean's mane, or the story of Leander, as you turn off the stop-cock ? And you that bathe properly at Newport or Long Branch, wrapped up in robes, whose attire clings so becomingly to your forms, and allows such facility of motion to your encumbered limbs ; who get the delightful sensation of moist garments, and keep off the damp sea from too close con-

tact with the heated frame, you envy not my primitive fashion, I suppose.

After the bath, a country ramble, across meadows and through marshes, hunting turtles and gathering blackberries, pricking your fingers and staining your faces, muddying your boots and tearing your trousers. None of your formal promenading here. Leave that for Broadway or Saratoga; we are far enough from either. Away from the road, with no danger of meeting a fine carriage full of fine people, who would stare, perhaps, at our plight; away from farm houses, and louts who would bellow to us to get out of that corn, or off of those potatoes, we rambled. Into the woods and among the underbrush; on the border of a stream whose tinkle we heard in the high grass; trampling the blue flags and splashing among the bull-frogs; every now and then frightening a bird from its haunt in the reeds, or getting frightened ourselves at a sudden frisk of a grasshopper, as he came plump in our faces. Now we can scarcely make our way through the thick growth of shrubs; the branches fly back in our eyes; the grass is higher than our heads, and here we go, knee-keep in the marsh; we must be near the stream. We stand still to listen; the crows caw, and the blackbirds whistle, and the frogs croak, and the grasshoppers sing, and the wind rustles so that we can scarcely catch the purling sound; but at last my ear distinguishes the clear sweet ripple, and in a minute more we have found the dark waters of the brook.

A drink, of course; and lying flat on the earth, we lap up the cool water, and moisten our faces, and look in the mirror that Indian girls use, and wonder who

would recognise the sun-burnt, smeared visages there reflected for habitués of the town. I am not an angler, or I might have emulated old Isaac Walton for a while; but fishing is too calm a pleasure for me. The tramp, and the woods, and the stream, and all the accessories I relish well enough, but not quietly waiting an hour for a nibble. Besides, my pole always breaks, and my line is sure to get entangled in the branches, and I never drop it in the right place, and I can never get the right bait, and the fish will never bite. So I would rather stroll till I am tired, and then fling myself down on the green bank-side, and watch the stream as it glides or rolls along; sometimes turning over towards an opening in the trees and gazing at a distant hill-top, more often looking straight up into the branches, and counting the leaves, and tracing the form of the tree through the foliage, or noting the delicate harmonies of color—the sad shading of the bark, the rich tint of the leaves, and the exquisite effect produced when a breeze sets all the gentle things in motion and shakes light and color down on me.

Then, too, I have a fancy for lying face downwards; for making acquaintance with the inhabitants of the grass; for watching the ants travel through the moss, and the beetles cross continents of sand. I peer right down into the mysteries of the little world; never caring for bites and stings that punish my curiosity, heedless of the swarms of black, and green, and yellow, and red dwarfs that get on my face and swarm on my body, Lilliputians on Gulliver. How busy the creatures are, to be sure! The broad sun that burns me doesn't disturb them; the thick shade of a leaf, or the reflection



of a mighty spire of grass protects a whole colony of insects.

"And whither fly the gnats but to the sun?"

Shakspeare has lain in the grass as well as I.

But we have lounged lazily here long enough: I must find one other spot ere we return. We follow the stream, sometimes on its brink, and quite as often in its bed: for of all things I do like to get my feet wet, to splash right in the waters of the current. I retain a vivid recollection of the whippings I got as a boy for this very thing, and the charm hasn't worn away yet. I dashed in yesterday with as much glee as if I expected to be spanked when I got home. Up the stream then, to a mimic falls, where the brook widens and divides; where an island of rocks deepens the channel, and a tiny cataract eddies and foams and gurgles in the prettiest way imaginable. The trees meet overhead, the shade is thick, and only glimpses here and there of blue sky can be got; only here and there a ray of the broad sunlight fleckers the wave and makes it seem to dance more merrily. The water must be two or three feet deep and nearly as wide; it quite rages in one particular place, and just here is a broad, flat rock, where I have sat many a time, a truant, and dabbled in the whirlpool, and listened to the screaming raven that had a nook hard by. How glad I was to find the charm not broken; the spot is as cool, the trees as tall, the water as clear as ten years ago. I have seen Niagara and St. Anthony, the St. Lawrence and the Ohio, since I used to wonder at the Little Falls, but I liked them as well as ever yesterday.

## THE WATERING-PLACES.

" Art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too !"

*Much Ado About Nothing.*

A VAGABOND may go to Saratoga, I suppose. He may drive, and drink the waters, may he not? He may bathe at Newport, and dance; and he may like all this better than those who are constantly telling how stupid are the watering-places, how insipid the people, how senseless the modes of passing the time. True, indeed, you must dress in the morning, and you must dress (at Newport) for the bath, and again after it; and you must dress for dinner, and again for the drive, and again for the evening. True, you will be bored by stupid and vulgar people, who go to the watering-places as they go everywhere else. I have no doubt there will be some in heaven; but would you stay away on that account? True, you are incessantly annoyed by the consciousness of suffering unconscionable extortions; you are handed over to Morris if you want a seat at the grand dinner, and after you have bargained with him to his heart's content, you walk in and expect to be supplied. Ah! ignorant, innocent one! where ignorance is not bliss, what then? Why, make haste to hand Boston—that indifferent black behind your chair, who hears you not and sees you not, though in such close propinquity—

make haste, I say, to hand him what shall open his eyes and unstop his ears; or else you will be calling for soup when your neighbors have finished their Charlotte Russe. All this is vexatious, I admit.

Then, too, you have other sufferings at the watering-places: you are cooped up in a room not so large as you hope your coffin will be; your accommodations, if you are a single Vagabond, are of the most peculiarly limited description; your washstand primitive in its form; your bed—but ask me not to describe its Procrustean horrors. You are colonized, perhaps; sent off to sleep far away from your hotel, and compelled four or five times a day to run the gauntlet of innumerable eyes as you pass to the colony, before the luckier ones, who only mount a few stories when they want to dress. If you dislike dancing and gaiety; if you have a horror of pretty women and crinoline; if you are a misanthrope come to drink the waters, and incensed at your happy fellow creatures who have no need to drink them; if you are suffering from the gout, or some other complaint brought on by the excess of those pleasures which the young and gay are now sharing around you; of course all this life and excitement, this constant change, this amusement, annoys you, adds to your misery. The music of Munck or the Germania band grates on your ears; the sight of the colonnade at the United States after dinner is a positive pandemonium to you; and you wish all those fools who bathe might be drowned, all those healthy creatures who drink the waters might be poisoned.

But no such testy old curmudgeon reads the Vagabond's papers; if any ever took one up, he quickly threw it down again, exclaiming "The forward youngster! the

foolish ignoramus!" The Vagabond writes not for those who see the world through the glasses that discolor and distort: the Vagabond, mayhap, looks with no certain vision or correct gaze, but he sees such beautiful sights that he would not exchange his eyes, imperfect though they be, for the experienced ones of any grumbler in Christendom. The Vagabond sees as the young see; he knows that thousands of others are in his company; that a goodly number feel with him, think with him, enjoy with him; are enthusiastic and eager, foolish and fickle, it may be, but they enjoy themselves; they are a class, and why not write for them? Anacreon celebrated the praises of the vine for the devotees of Bacchus; Sappho sang of love and had her audience: have not the young also a right to a priest? Shall I not chronicle their—*our* fancies?

The young enjoy Saratoga. The Vagabond enjoys Saratoga. He can appreciate all the discomforts and yet forget them; he can admit that the pleasures counterbalance. And is there really nothing to be said for the delicious *far niente*? Is it not delightful to sit on the wide piazzas after dinner, and watch the brilliant, sauntering crowd, timing their talk and their walk to the strains of "Lucia" or "Ernani?" Is there no pleasure in a stroll under the old elms down to the springs, beside some charmer without a bonnet? Is there nothing to be said of the exhilarating effect of the waters; nothing for the drive to the lake; nothing for the dinners on its banks, and the sails on its bosom? Is there no pleasure in meeting friends from all parts of the country; in joining the brilliant throng after nightfall; in pacing up and down with Norah by moonlight in the long corri-

dor, looking on at the quadrille, or even, ye gods! sharing the polka with Fanny?

And the early morning hour! meeting X. at the springs before breakfast, while the band is playing; watching her in that exquisite morning costume, a piece of good fortune you don't often enjoy in town; and if you will, quizzing your acquaintances as they make wry faces over the thirteenth glass. The varied characters and appearance of this little world, make one feel like a cosmopolite. The hobbling old man, the gay ambassador, the stately general, the plain ex-President, the brilliant belle, the fashionable Fitz Frivol, the grave clergyman from the Union Hall, the weak invalid, the boisterous, fast young man—surely there is a pleasure to be gleaned in watching all these phases of society.

Another phase not many have watched, I fancy: not many have gone to the springs in the evening, when the ladies' maids drink the water. It is delightful to see the Abigails promenade down the hill. As their mistresses wear no bonnets at Saratoga, the servants are of course in the mode; they have thrown their coarse shawls over their shoulders in humble imitation of that graceful negligence which was so irresistible in the morning; and, indeed, I saw more than one elegant lace that I had worshipped because it enveloped the form of some Norah or Fanny, wound around a great, coarse creature later in the day. Then they play off their airs at second-hand in the most amusing manner; they inquire how their friends are affected by the waters; they ask how you like the hotel; whether you prefer Saratoga to Newport, and exclaim how dull are all the watering-places this year.

Newport has delights all its own: the magnificent drives and the invigorating, exhilarating bath. One of the oddest sights in the world is the crowd assembled daily on the Newport beach to bathe. First, there is the long, hard, smooth beach, with the great, green waves rolling mightily up, and breaking in a line of surf on its edge; there is the distant reach of the sea, and the fresh breeze cooling you on the hottest of August mornings. In the back-ground, the row of quaint little bathing-houses, as small as the prison cells at Auburn or Sing-Sing. Into these enter the gay children of fashion, sometimes bedight with care, and gather up their extended robes as they crowd through the narrow door, or stoop their lofty heads for luck; and save a few stragglers or lookers on, the beach is nearly bare, for a while. One, here and there, more expeditious than the others, first peeps out, and finally ventures forth from the chrysalis; but the brilliant butterfly is gone, and a thin, lank figure, ridiculously clad, scarcely reminds us of the elegant creature that disappeared so short a while ago. While we are wondering and laughing at the metamorphosis, a whole troop sallies forth, looking as wild and uncouth as Indians; bare-footed (delicate, tiny, white feet you can see, if you look sharp), bare-headed, or else with the oddest of straw hats tied down in the oddest of fashions, and such robes! Turkish trousers and Spanish doublet, a cosmopolitan costume. You can scarcely tell a man from a woman; you can scarcely distinguish your acquaintances. You cannot find the graceful charmer who was to be your partner in the bath! Ah! here she comes, shambling along; her eyes, however, sparkle as

brightly as ever; you would know her anywhere by them; and taking her hand (how soft it is, to be sure, and how tight you may hold it now), you run together into the sea.

But we are to be lookers-on to-day; we are to notice the comical figures of our friends as they rush in and out; the ungainly attempts at dignity of some in their unwonted costume; the gleesome, childish folly, and frolic of the others. We are to hear the laughing tones, the occasional whoop of fun, the scream of half-felt terror from some timorous maiden, as her lusty lover plunges the little head into the tenth wave. We are to watch the sports till the bathers are tired, and then we have a sport of our own. It was funny to see them go in; to notice the attempts at finery and the fanciful dresses; the pink trimmings and the blue bindings. But what is it to see them come out? Their dark, dripping garments clinging close to the form, revealing every outline, and that not gracefully; their hats broken, and their hair, mayhap, dishevelled; their feet tender and tripping, and they conscious of the sorry sight they present, yet not more than half ashamed; too busy laughing at each other to care for themselves, they run up hastily to their little dens. One or two fat old dowagers endeavor to stalk statelily, but, unluckily, waddle instead. One or two incorrigibly vain maidens endeavor to pull out the wet trousers from their legs, and spread the scant allowance of skirt into an imitation of crinoline; but they only make themselves more ridiculous. The best way is to accept the unavoidable evil, and laugh at it. You *are* ridiculous in bathing costume, certainly. If you are as graceful as a *houri*, or as finely

formed as Apollo, your grace and beauty are effectually concealed.

The bath is fine while you are in the water, but marvellously relaxing in its effect afterwards. You are fain to drive to your hotel; you hurry to your chamber, and order a strengthening draught. They say the most delicate females feel the need of a restorative, and the glasses clink for an hour along the passages; and then all the world sleeps till it is time to dress for dinner. Two or three lounge into the bowling-alleys, or practise in the pistol-gallery; but most prefer to recruit themselves for the after fatigues and pleasures of the day.

The drive. How can I describe the drive! The procession of carriages filled with gay and beautiful faces, recruited from each hotel, winds along, it may be to the old fort, to listen to the music, or to Bateman's, to look at the sea. The drive to Bateman's is one of the most magnificent I ever enjoyed. The sea views are superb, and the air so invigorating, the roll of the waves so musical, the glance at the white, tossing crests so inspiring, that I wonder not it is a favorite. The horses, too, feel the influence, and prance, and trot or run more eagerly; the ladies glance more brightly, and smile and bow more graciously; the sun sets more brilliantly than elsewhere. And you will tell me 'tis all stupid frivolity, this enjoyment; that those who best know how to enjoy themselves are mistaken; that those who make pleasure the study and business of their lives, do not know; that the distinguished and cultured people who for years have resorted to watering-places are all fools; that Ems and Baden-Baden, and Nassau too, afford no delight; that Saratoga and Newport are only fit for vagabonds. Perhaps 'tis so.



## BEHIND THE SCENES.

"That's the scene that I would see."

*Much Ado About Nothing.*

I RECOLLECT once watching a distinguished historian peep through the crevices in his stage-box, poke his fingers into a hole in the wall, and spend nearly the entire act of a play in vain endeavors to peer behind the scenes. He took off his gloves, he tried opera-glass and eye-glass, he was as persevering as Robert Bruce, or his spider, but less fortunate, and at last was fain to content himself with the performance on the stage. And who, like the historian, has not longed to penetrate the mysteries of that hidden world? Who has not been curious about the *coulisses*? Who has not wondered what they do in the green-room and at rehearsal? The plays that pretend to give pictures of an actor's life are always popular; the novels that treat of similar subjects are sure to be read. The success of Peg Woffington was half attributable to its vivid descriptions of the *demi-monde*. And how delighted we all were to see Rachel in "Adrienne Lecouvreur," studying her part of Roxane. To be sure Pendennis got disenchanted when he met the Fotheringay off the stage, and George Sand describes a theatre by daylight as the most doleful of places: I never shall forget the dismal impression I got from reading the

pages in "Consuelo," where the Berlin theatre is so grimly portrayed. But the reality is not so bad. Ask Wilhelm Meister.

The first time I ever was behind the scenes was at the old Vauxhall Gardens, years ago. A party of us boys got on the stage by day, and without the knowledge of the attendants; it was late in the afternoon, rehearsal was over, and nobody there. We rummaged the property-room, we discovered the theatrical wardrobe, we handled the pulleys, and finally raised the curtain and acted a play. It was glorious sport; I remember looking out of a stage balcony, and spouting verses to one of my comrades beneath; I remember wearing a great wig and a sword, and that some of us were muffled in ermine robes, and stalked majestically across the boards—only my sword would get between my legs, and my fellow nearly broke his neck by falling through a trap-door. We especially liked to change the scenes; the prompter's bell rang every two or three minutes, and the curtain rose and fell amazingly often. Finally, we got more perfect in our parts, and determined to have an overture performed; so one of us jumped into the orchestra, and found some instruments left there. The next thing I remember was an alarm that the usher was coming, "for he heard the loud bassoon," and we scampered away without regard to stage directions, or exits to the right. We stood not upon the order of our going; but went at once. My hiding-place was in a barrel, prepared for the farce that night, and when I emerged I was blacker than soot. However, the usher did not discover our retreats, so we lay quiet until dark, and then ran home. That very night I sat in front, and how

strangely familiar everything looked to me, who had been initiated. I wondered no longer at the apparitions, and was particularly indifferent to the balcony scene; I recognised our ermine on the stage king, and thought of the trap-doors as he strode so bravely on.

That adventure, however, was soon forgotten; I had not thought of it in a dozen years till I sat down to write this paper. The next time I went into the *coulisses* was under very different circumstances. It was at night; the play was on; I stood in the wings, among the scene-shifters and supernumeraries, the managers, and prompters, and call-boys—all huddled together in strange confusion. Some were bedizened in theatrical finery, others clad in ordinary gear; a noble in silk and satin, and paste jewels, by the side of a workman with his sleeves rolled up; Pizarro talking with Mr. Smith, and the principal actress scolding her waiting-maid. In the midst of my conversation with an actor, he would rush upon the stage, declaiming furiously, and, if the scene was short, return and take up his last remark exactly where it had been discontinued. What particularly amazed me was the indifference of the actors to their parts. Poor innocent I, had imagined that they were all so in earnest, so devoted to their art, so identified with the characters they assumed, whereas they never seemed to think of them a moment after they left the stage. Before entering, they smoothed down their finery as a peacock would his plumage, and got ready for a stage strut; but as for any thought of Sir Peter Teazle or Claude Melnotte, in the wings, you might as well look for it at a Methodist camp-meeting. They would ask after brandy, or remark how poor the house

was, or joke with the actresses, or swear at the sceler-shifters ; but the grace, or dignity, or fervor, so wonderful or winning when seen from the front, was not perceptible behind the scenes. This is true, I suppose, of actors generally.

But I have been with those who identified themselves with their parts. I have been shown to my box by Hamlet in all his trappings and suits of woe, and with all the courteous and princely demeanor that became the Dane. I have talked with Romeo in his dressing-room, when he could not and did not divest himself of his splendid manner or his intense feeling any more than of his doublet and hose. When Macready played Richelieu, he coughed and shambled as much off the stage as on. The great tragic actors, too, are often excessively exhausted after playing ; not only physically fatigued, not only unable to rise without assistance, after a fall or a death-scene, but intellectually wearied as well. I have known them laid on a board panting and perspiring for some minutes after a great point. Talma, they say, had always to be wrapped in a cloak and carried from the theatre ; Mrs. Siddons would sob for an hour after one of her great performances ; and I have been with some of these geniuses who were excessively excited, as if by wine, for half the night, after the play. The immense tax upon nerve and brain, as well as the corporeal exertion necessary in the playing of great parts, of course makes them strangely unlike the rest of the world.

And how strange a thing it is, this genius ! You may be talking all day with a man or woman, perhaps studying with them the very part they are to play at night,

quarrelling over their readings, criticising their conceptions, and then go and see them transformed, cry over the very line you thought they misapprehended, shudder at the gesture you declared would be ridiculous, and applaud as vigorously as any one at the acting you contended against all day. There is no form in which genius manifests itself so palpably as this of histrionic sort; there is no phase of humanity that is more a mystery to me. What talent, or perseverance, or study can accomplish is not wonderful, is at least comprehensible. If you cannot do it yourself, you can understand how it is done. But this marvellous inspiration that comes down on a man as suddenly and strangely and unaccountably to the actor as to the audience—that transfigures him before your face, like Rachel in “Polyeucte” or young Booth in “Richelieu”—this surpasses in strangeness any other gift vouchsafed to the race. A man may write a poem, or paint a picture, that shall move you as much or more than anything on the stage; but the palpable presence and influence of genius are not so felt as when it works on the man himself; when his own soul and body are his tools and his material. Nothing in life or art strikes me as so wonderful.

However, to go to rehearsal with these people who get so inspired; to watch Othello mumbling his part, or Desdemona sitting down in a chair in the fifth act, and saying in ordinary tones, “Oh! oh! oh!” these being the rehearsal of her death groans; this is not so wonderful. I was amazed, when I first went to a rehearsal, that no more labor was bestowed on the business. I went to the wings to see an actor whom I knew. He

stood on the stage, talking with a well-dressed woman, and I concluded not to approach him. He looked at me and bowed, but did not offer to speak, and after a while I discovered that he was rehearsing. It had not occurred to me before. In the middle of a speech from Shakspeare they interpolate directions to the other players; they stop short in some exquisite line to suggest an entrance from the left; in fact, they rehearse only the words and the positions. All the effects, all the tones, the action, the facial expression is omitted, or slurred over; the dead words are recited without a particle of feeling, and the positions, where two or more actors are concerned, are gone through with. If a star is rehearsing, he gives his orders how he shall be supported, tells this poor devil when to approach and when to go, the other subordinates how to emphasize that line, so that star may not lose his point, and arranges matters generally so as to suit himself, and produce the greatest effect; which is all very proper, but cannot be extremely agreeable to the second-rate people, as they may be supposed to have sensibilities, if not position or talent.

In the middle of a scene, the cue will be given for an actor not on the stage, and you hear the call-boy shout—"Othello! Othello!" Othello may be in front talking with his friend, and clambers over the orchestra up to his place; and in Othello this is forgiven; but if Cassio should attempt an improper entrance, he is sent back to the other side of the stage. Then Desdemona cannot be found, and the last speaker repeats his cue half a dozen times, while the call-boy looks for the gentle Desdemona, and she comes hurriedly on without

the handkerchief. If we stay for the farce, we shall see the stage manager paying more attention; he has to be civil to the stars; he cannot interrupt them when their readings do not suit him, but he revenges himself upon the stock company. He snubs the pretty little waiting-maids, and orders about the Boxes and Coxes in grandiloquent style. These receive his directions with profound submission and contempt. The ballet-girls rehearse too: they lean against the wings and stick up their legs, and you wonder where is the grace that brings down the house in the evening. Opera rehearsals, many of my readers have attended; and Philharmonic rehearsals, who does not know of them? They are not so piquant, though perhaps as interesting, as a visit behind the scenes.

## LAKE GEORGE.

“ Let his silver water  
Keep a peaceful progress.”

*King John.*

To be sure, the Howadji has discoursed eloquently of Lake George; to be sure, others have written about its beauties, and the magazines have furnished historical and pictorial information concerning Tea Island and Ticonderoga: what need, indeed, for me to inflict my fancies on those who look for

“Something new and strange.”

But, Lake George is new to me. Its enchanting loveliness first broke upon my eyes last week; I then first sailed on its placid waters, and watched the shadows as they fell upon its softened hills; I last week first clambered over the gentle slopes along its sides, and rambled around the still recesses of its clustering islands; by the brink of the cascades that fall into its bosom, and through the cool thickets, where I could gaze my fill at the witching and varying charms of nature in her most delightful garb. Why, then, should I not tell how drunk I got with beauty? Why should I not revive to those familiar with the effects of clouds, and hills, and sunshine, and moonlight, and clear water, and sparkling waves and mirrored groves, as they are all blended in



Lake George ; why should I not endeavor to recall to them and me the charms so fresh and so enchanting ? Why should I not essay to picture to those who have not yet been gladdened by the delicious beauty of Horicon, the peculiarities that make it a spot unequalled in the New World ? Then, too, all things beautiful and fair are ever young, are always new ; we never tire of scenes familiar to us from childhood, if they possess a real loveliness. And nature comes to us in so many moods, under such various aspects, that it is sometimes worth while to know how she affects another mind. When one is thoroughly imbued with the spirit of a landscape, the earliest impression quite subsides ; the charm of novelty is gone, and in its stead that of friendship and intimacy is substituted ; we are won by another guise than that by which we first were wooed. Let me then tell how the loveliest spot in America first impressed the Vagabond.

And first, I have never been abroad. I know of Como and Geneva, only by description, by pictures and by imagination. I have fancied for myself a lake in Italy, from hearing Claude Melnotte's exquisite story, as who has not ? I have studied prints of those Swiss views, till I almost know them. I am sure I shall greet Mont Blanc and Luzerne as old acquaintances. Byron has made me familiar with the monarch of mountains, and lovely women have told me tales of embosomed lakes and towering hills, of picturesque towns and crumbling ruins on their sides, that with the charm of such association have become indelible in memory. Indeed, my recollections of Lake George are firmly fixed, if only because I heard an accomplished and beautiful creature recite

"Manfred," as we sailed together on its bosom, and compare the Highlands and Bolton with the hills around Geneva. Nature showered all delights on lucky me; and I, perhaps, am not a fair judge of the beauties of Lake George: a tamer spot would have seemed superlative. Still, others agree in remembering its charms; only, if one wants to see it to the best advantage, he should be so fortunate as to go thither in company with those whose society and sympathy add a new zest to the highest pleasure.

To one, then, who has no memories of Europe, but who has seen most that America claims of lovely or grand, Lake George seems lovelier, and if not grander, more absolutely natural than all besides. The naturalness is as great a charm to me as the surpassing beauty. I hate your village scenery; I like nature unadorned. These detestable cottages and aspiring towns that infest all beautiful spots; these intrusions of man into the sacred places of nature—Actæon ever in Diana's bathing-place—this thrusting of vulgar shops and hideous houses into the wildest recesses and most secluded groves, I cannot abide. I want either town or country; the absolute, crowded excitement of a great city, or the privacy of woods and streams. Cultivated scenery has no charm for me; farming countries and grazing countries, nicely-painted barns and wells, crowing cocks and grunting pigs I leave for those who affect domesticity; who like Herring's pictures of farming life. I cannot away with them. I want groves which you can fancy the dryads of antiquity would love to haunt; streams that you look into in search of Arethusa; spots where Titania and Puck may come upon you unawares; river-sides

where the culprit fay might strive to catch the drop as it falls from the leaping sturgeon. And such a spot is Lake George. When you glide over its waters, into some nook that reminds you of Virgil's exquisite

"Est in secessu longo,"

or peep between branches where the Mohicans would still find themselves at home, and where indeed the traditions of the red men yet linger, you can throw aside all thoughts of the outer world. No curling smoke reminds you of culinary proceedings; no glaring, white-washed boards recall petty village scandal; no aping, gothic turret bespeaks the bad taste of aspiring citizens. You may sail between the islands, looking down into the clear water of the lake, and watch the fishes as they chase each other far below, or, mayhap, catch glimpses of the pebbly bottom; you may gaze at the sky and banks reflected there, or looking upwards, watch the fleecy clouds lazily lingering on the mountain summit, or rolling serenely along in the higher ether. I was struck with the important part that clouds and sky bear in a landscape. You never picture to yourself a beautiful or awful scene without imagining the firmament; you never gaze, especially at a distant view, without taking in as much of heaven as earth. Not only do the shadows fleck the hillsides, and soften the outlines, and vary the effect; not only do the clouds descend to the heaving bosom of earth as she holds it up to the sun; not only are the blue ether and the white heaped up cumuli reflected in the mirroring lake; but the sky itself, with the varying shades of rain cloud and fine cirri, the big, white billows of the cumulus, all enter

into the composition of the scene. The peculiar effects of morning and evening skies, the gorgeous tints of sunrise and sunset, of course are as remarkable as any beauties of the lower world.

All these I watched on Horicon. It rained one day on the distant hills, and so shut out a portion of the view ; but after a while, the soft grey curtain lifted, and showed a green hill lighted up by sunshine, lying far behind. A glimpse was all we caught, ere the cloud descended, and we were ourselves enveloped. I sat on the wide piazza, looking down the lake, to watch the breaking up of the rain storm ; to count the peaks as they came into view, seeming almost to descend to us out of the clouds ; to get sight of a patch here and there of woods, while all around was grey ; to see the first sunbeam strike the water, which gladly sparkled back in recognition ; to follow with my eyes the storm as it passed away, and left the surface of the lake glittering with a purer brightness, the wooded hills clad in a fresher green, the heavens refulgent with a clearer blue.

Ah, me! those rounded hills, that winding lake, those dotting islands! How can I imagine them! I have said nothing but what might be said of any lovely scene ; I have given no idea of the enchanting loveliness of Lake George. How can the fleeting beauties of clouds and sky be caught and caged in words? How can the evanescent glories of morning and evening be painted with pen or pencil? How can the superlative grace, the wild picturesqueness of the masterpiece of God be described by a creature? Man can only strive to appreciate. And yet, I cannot stop without again attempting to say wherein consists the peculiar charm of this

charming spot. Its entire naturalness I have already adverted to: its fringed islands, scattered all around, and taking every form, add vastly to the effect. They are small and large, wooded and bare, rocky and plain; narrowing the channel at times; again, one just dotting the wide expanse. Some are covered to a considerable height with thick woods; some just crested with a sparser foliage; some so tiny, they were fit mooring for the bark of Oberon; others suggest the ambush of a dusky tribe. Then the wonderful variety and exquisite forms that the hills assume, coming down at times to the lake abruptly, and shutting it in to a narrow gorge, through which it winds almost like the Hudson at West Point; rising again to a lofty height away off in the distance, and leaving the waters to spread out into a broader sheet. Now softly moulded into forms that remind you of the exquisite outlines of womanly grace, now jagged and abrupt, but ever beauteous rather than grand. The picturesqueness is always subdued into grace; the wildness is, if not tamed, yet softened. It is the wildness of an Indian girl, fresh, exquisite in outline, charming in grace, varying in expression and tender in everything; not the grandeur of a mountain, or a cataract, or a Mohican chief. Rightly was it named Horicon—the sparkling water; rightly was it called the Sacrament—the sacred lake; rightly do they baptize its jutting capes—Sabbath day; the stillness and the glad sparkle combine to make it a place for all pure and beautiful thoughts.

## THE HOWADJI.

"Respue, quod non es."

PERSIUS.

MOLIÈRE, you know, used to read his plays to his housekeeper, and if she laughed at the "Précieuses Ridicules" or "Le Médecin Malgré Lui," the great comedian was satisfied. So I sometimes show the manuscript of a paper to a confidante (notice the final *e*) and am sure to receive a sincere criticism. I told Confidante I was going to write about the Howadji. Confidante thought the subject was injudiciously chosen; Vagabond could not discover the injudiciousness: Confidante insisted that the discussion would be too personal; that I would descant upon Mr. Curtis as a lecturer and a political speaker, as well as a writer; that there had been no recent event to render such a discussion timely; that I had no right to say anything about him except in his literary character. Vagabond replied that Mr. Curtis's entire public career was fairly open to comment; that he was a subject sure always to prove interesting; and that he had within a short while afforded a topic of discussion to the newspapers by his political address at a college anniversary. Who was right—Confidante or Vagabond?

The admiration with which Mr. Curtis has been re-

garded by so many, has of late been diminished in certain quarters. The *détour* he has made into the domain of politics, has let slip the dogs of war upon him, and many think havoc was not cried in vain. I do not, indeed, consider his success entire in this new career. I heard him speak in the political campaign, a year ago, more than once or twice. I have read both of his scholarly and exquisitely beautiful, but illogical and ill-timed harangues before college societies; and though I recognise sufficient evidence of a riper mind and a more manly tone; though the very thing that was previously lacking in his efforts appears now to be infused into them, a purpose and an aim; yet so many tares are mingled with the wheat, he seems to me to have done so many of those things that he ought not to have done, that the doing of those things he ought to have done scarcely atones. I cannot congratulate him upon the result of his political endeavors. The bad taste of intruding his own notions and forcing his own doctrines upon a mixed assembly, one anticipating a purely literary entertainment, cannot be excused because of his sincerity, or because of his belief in the importance of his theme. Neither can his own eloquent apology be accepted. I remember very well to have read the opening of his oration at Middleton till my blood tingled. I remember to have felt all the force of his splendid illustrations of the scholar's duty in a great crisis not to remain idle or indifferent. I acknowledge the poetry of his thoughts, the charm of his expressions, and the rich array of ornaments with which he set them forth. But supposing everything to have been as he claimed it; supposing his ideas on politics to have been correct, and admitting the

force of his adjurations and illustrations, I could not discover their pertinency. He proclaimed the scholar's duty, but that duty was not to be performed in the place and under the circumstances that Mr. Curtis selected. All that he said would have been appropriate at a political meeting, or in an assemblage of cultivated men convened to discuss public matters, or anticipating such an oration as Mr. Curtis delivered; but, thrust upon an audience to many of whom it might have proved offensive, and to all of whom it must have been unexpected, it was ill-timed, ill-judged, and inappropriate.

Neither do I think these efforts were successful, regarded simply as political efforts. That their literary merits are great is undoubted. They are finer written than any other of Mr. Curtis's productions; they contain passages full of genuine and tender feeling, and exquisite in melody as the syllables of Italian poetry; they are rich in beautiful thoughts, and overlaid with ornament; at times indeed, rather profuse in embellishment, and so exceedingly mellifluous that the sweetness cloy; at times so elaborate that the wealth of illustration seems almost ostentatious; but, on the whole, delightful compositions—until their author approaches the core of his subject, until he attempts to deal with harsher matter than is fit for his delicate handling. When he leaves his rounded periods and historical allusions, when he gets from Galileo and Milton, and summer skies, and flowers and breezes, to political history and political economy, he is not so successful. His mind is not logical; he cannot make out his case; he cannot even make these heavier matters interesting. I have read many a political disquisition, many of the speeches on both sides of last



year's campaign, many a newspaper article from the Charleston Mercury or the New York Tribune, that was vastly preferable to Mr. Curtis's attempts; many an effort from the hands of men greatly his inferiors in elegant culture or poetical fancy, that was more telling, more convincing, more successful than the political endeavors of the Howadji. His luxurious muse was more at home lounging on the banks of the Nile, or lotus-eating at the Catskills or Niagara.

Yet I own to have felt a warm glow at some of his generous enthusiasm; I believe him to have been very much in earnest; I appreciated his fervor, and acknowledge that he did, here and there, infuse some of it into his orations; but it was in those portions less distinctly political; it was when he could talk of Leonidas, or gild his phrase with the pomp of rhetoric.

The Howadji has a youthful ardor which cannot fail at times to stir the blood, but I do not think he possesses the rarer power of reaching the heart. His eloquence may in time be moulded into something like the perfection of Mr. Everett's style, which is that of Thalberg—the most consummate art; the very perfection of elaboration; the crowning elegance that Cicero attained in his full and polished periods; but Mr. Everett, though he is a prose poet, and pleases your fancy and tickles your ear, though he delights your taste and satisfies your intellect, never moves you, never comes near your heart. Nor do I think Mr. Curtis will ever attain this highest and last result of oratory. The way to the hearts of men is known but to few; it is never discovered by research; 'tis found by a clue that those who possess may use, but never impart. So, with all the warmth

of Mr. Curtis, with all his earnestness, greater now than Everett's, he never seems to me to have hold of this clue through the labyrinthine passages that lead to the human heart. He seems not to possess genius.

His political speeches, made at mass meetings, were not so fine as the more elaborate efforts I have spoken of; they especially lack the Demosthenean vigor so necessary on the hustings. He spoke often in covered rooms and when the front seats were reserved for ladies, and he could not always refrain from saying a word or two for the ladies, whose especial favorite he is. His arguments were either derived from analogy, or weak; his appeals invariably lacked force; his highest sallies failed of effect. He always spoke agreeably and sometimes wittily, but too nicely for the occasion. Though he evidently took great pains not to be fine, though he tried hard to use cant terms and slang phrases, they would not come readily from his tongue; he could not speak the speech trippingly; he could not saw the air with his hand—thus; he could not split the ears of the groundlings. And it is not only the groundlings who want their ears split at a political meeting; the best informed and the best cultured prefer a telling speech to an elaborate one. Mr. Curtis knows this as well as any one, and endeavored to conform himself to the requirements of the situation; but nature did not second his endeavor. She had not intended him for this purpose, and would not allow him to wrest himself from what she designed; so the Howadji did not succeed as a political speaker.

His purely literary career has been often discussed; in parlors and libraries as often as in newspapers and

magazines. All the reading world has read the "Potiphar Papers" and the "Lotus Eating;" all New York and Boston, and I do not know how many other cities, went to his lectures. I have recently read one or two of his works again: "Prue and I," in its collected form, and the "Nile Notes;" one, among the earliest, the other almost the latest of his avowed productions. They are both characteristic. In both I find the same richness of fancy, the same sweet tooth that will have mellifluous phrases and gorgeous images. The pomp of the east and the luscious odor of the lotus, are renewed, and revived, and repeated till one is sated. His luxuriant style is very well for a while, or at times, but palls at last. It is, however, relieved by a vein of sarcasm, to which he might with advantage more frequently resort. There is a point in his irony, a sharpness in his satire, that one relishes after the unalloyed sweets that he lavishes. I wish he would cultivate this talent more assiduously, and let the other alone. The skill displayed in the "Potiphar Papers," though it was the skill of a neophyte, yet would warrant him in making other efforts. Though he was much given to exaggeration, and his satire often degenerated into caricature, there was still a wisdom in his wit, a likeness in his caricature, that proved he had not mistaken his talent.

I like him better as an essayist or a sketcher of manners than as a critic. I did not often agree with his judgment of the great novelists; I could not set Dickens so far above Scott; I did not find all the geniality in Thackeray that he discovered; I do not recognise Kingsley as a master spirit. I am not a disciple in that school in literature whose doctrines Mr. Curtis has so warmly

espoused. But it is not only because I do not concur with his criticisms, that I do not admire them. I have read many able and eloquent disquisitions with whose conclusions I entirely disagreed. But I did not detect in Mr. Curtis's lectures any peculiar critical acumen; he opened my eyes to no new merits in his subjects; he dissected them not with any extraordinary skill; he set their characters in no new light; he gave me no new ideas about the modern British novelists. When he sketched the men or the times in which they lived, he was graceful and vivid; he was always interesting and frequently witty; but his lectures scarcely made a definite or an abiding impression; they simply afforded an agreeable mode of spending an evening.

I believe some work is reserved for Mr. Curtis more suited to his talent than any he has yet undertaken. I confess myself one of his admirers; I find a fascination in almost everything he writes, though upon calmly considering it, I frequently see nothing so wonderful; but the fascination proves the power: and there are thousands like me, in this regard. The man who can exert this influence must have something in him. I shall be glad when it comes out. Spider-like, let him spin the web, that shall entangle us all in its meshes. I, for one, am very willing to be enthralled.

## CHARLOTTE CUSHMAN.

"DON PEDRO.—Maybe she doth but counterfeit.

CLAUDIO.—Faith, like enough."

*Much Ado About Nothing.*

I HAVE no doubt that many who witnessed Miss Cushman's performance of Meg Merrilies were glad to remind themselves that what they saw was counterfeit; they were glad to shake off the horrible impression left by that weird figure, that ghost-like movement, that crazy face, that shrieking voice. Many have told me that they could not sleep after seeing this acting; the tall, gaunt gipsy haunted their dreams, the wild, unearthly tones startled them from their pillow, the fierce eyeballs glared through the dark night on them. Many, too, have told me that the acting is overdone; that the conception and execution of this part are beyond what Scott imagined, are melodramatic, are too frightful to be natural. And, indeed, I think Scott never imagined so strange a creation as that which Miss Cushman embodies. I think the actress in this transcends the novelist; her imagination is wilder than Scott's; she does carry his idea beyond anything indicated in "Guy Mannering." But so much the more praise; so much the more admiration have I for the actress who combines an imagination to conceive with the surpassing ability to

execute so singular an idea as that of Meg Merrilies. That Miss Cushman's idea is exaggerated, I cannot admit. It is utterly unlike anything not only on the stage, but with which in real life we are now familiar; but I can find nothing in it extravagant. It verges upon the supernatural; it is great enough for one of the witches of "Macbeth;" it is as grotesquely terrible as Hecate herself; but no more untrue to itself, no more unnatural when you consider the type, than the horrors of the Eumenides, or the grandeurs of the sisters three. Feeling and intellect are both made manifest, and that indefinable something that invests the whole, and makes what would otherwise only be repelling, truly great; that makes tragedy; that is akin to the awe inspired by the "Inferno" of Dante, or the incantations of "Der Freischütz."

The embodiment of this idea is perfection. From the first rush upon the stage, which almost takes away your breath, and the fixed attitude, the strained limb and eye, when Meg recognises Harry Bertram, to the last shriek of exultation and the death rattle in her throat, all is great. Not only eminently effective at the moment, but vivid and wonderful in the recollection; not only startling when you see it, but equally so when you think of it afterwards. The character loses its repulsiveness to me. I see the dirt and rags; I see the wrinkles and elf-locks, the wild eye and the shrivelled limbs; I hear the hoarse and broken tones of age and passion, the convulsive laughter and the gritting teeth; but with all these I see and hear more. I see the creature inspired to foretell and accomplish the restoration of an ancient house; full of the passion of her race, yet with one

sympathy that connects her with humanity ; tender and earnest when she thinks of her bairn.

The crooning over Bertram's hand, the tears that blind her eyes when she fain would gaze into his face, the sobs that choke her utterance in striving to speak his name, make the old hag human ; awake sympathetic emotions even for Meg Merrilies : for she owns an affection, that, in its holiness, as well as in its intensity, is anything but unnatural.

The fact that Miss Cushman has contrived to crowd all this character into the few lines given her in the abortion of a play that is put upon the stage, makes her abilities all the more admirable. What Scott only hinted at, even in the pages of description and narrative allotted to Meg in the novel, the great actress has seized upon, amplified, developed, and then compressed into a few scenes, a few words. Her marvellous talent for what is technically called "making up," presents us with the picture that lives so indelibly in our memory ; her exquisite elocution enables her to accommodate her voice to the necessities of the unusual situations of the play, to break it with age, to thicken it with the choking sensation of death, to loosen it in the cry of agony, to repress it to the hollow murmur of despair ; while the genius that makes her feel so acutely the proprieties of the character is only equalled by the consummate art that dictates and accomplishes such touches as her sliding, sidelong gait ; her frantic but significant gestures ; her attitudes, so ungainly, but so wildly expressive, that they speak more forcibly than words. I can conceive of no more exact, no more effective picture, than that afforded by Miss Cushman's performance of Meg Merrilies.

But in nothing else do I so admire her. In Romeo and Rosalind she is intellectual; she reads with an exquisite appreciation of the language and the sentiment, and especially of the wit of a part; her gestures are always full of meaning, are always appropriate, are occasionally fine; her intonations generally please a scholar and a man of taste; but she entirely fails to move me in either part, and in her conception of each character she differs entirely from my own idea. Romeo, indeed, I have never seen played to suit me. I have seen one who looked a Romeo, who had all the beauty and voice I fancy in the love-sick Montague, but who failed entirely to infuse any spirit into the words he lavishes on his mistress; and Miss Cushman so fails to look the character, that this alone would prevent my deriving any satisfaction from her performance. Then her actions are not youthful, her manner not sprightly, her tones not spirited, her passion not intense enough for the lover of Verona. Her Rosalind lacks the captivating simplicity, the arch coyness, that I look for in the merry maid of Ardenne. It proves that she has no comic talent. The lightness, the grace, the ease, the charming vivacity of comedy, are talents not vouchsafed to her who plays Meg Merrilies. Siddons and Rachel, before her, discovered that the tragic muse receives no divided homage.

Neither am I so great an admirer of Miss Cushman in her more womanly characters. I prefer Miss Heron to her in Bianca, and Rachel in Tisbé. With her rendering of the former part, one could not but be greatly pleased; I acknowledge the force and expression of her attitudes, the correctness of her gene-



ral conception, and, above all, the admirable taste of her reading. Everything indicated a careful student, an accomplished artist, one who appreciated thoroughly the thought of her author; but the performance failed to affect me. I did not once experience that intense emotion Miss Heron caused in the same play. I remember distinctly that in all rendering of womanly feeling, in harrowing tenderness, in terrific agony and in the mad remorse of the close, Miss Heron was superior. She kept you in a constant state of excitement; you had no time to criticise; you were shivering or choking by turns. When Miss Cushman played Bianca, I was cold; I admired, I observed, I perceived what was done and what was left undone; I was on the lookout for sensations that she did not arouse.

And in *Tisbé*, oh! how sadly I felt the contrast between her and the great Frenchwoman! Miss Cushman was powerful, effective, excellent; she gave a coarse picture in strong colors and masculine outlines, a wild, fierce creature, a real Bohemian; but again she failed to move me, though I confess I saw handkerchiefs in use around me. But in this play I noted especially the inferiority of Miss Cushman, not only to Rachel, but to many other great geniuses of the stage. Here she was not truly tragic: she was only dramatic. She lacked entirely the classic grace, the ineffable dignity, that clothed the creations of Rachel; she was earthly and common; she was not at all imaginative. Rachel in *Tisbé*, was the very incarnation of Italy. The stately mistress of a Paduan duke, the haughty actress pouring out curses on a guilty duchess, the suspicious creature glaring around the bedchamber of a rival, the

gipsy's daughter saving her whom she hated, were by the great Jewess all rendered, not only so as to move you with terror and sympathy, but so as to provoke your admiration too. There was a symmetry, a statuesque beauty, an enchanting grace that one would look for in vain in Miss Cushman's Tisbé.

I seldom have been able to detect true tenderness in Miss Cushman; I have seldom noticed real womanly feeling. Those characters in which she excels are masculine; the Meg Merrilies has no touch of femininity; and in whatever there is of great about anything else she does, it resembles or approaches this; a tone, a gesture, if it be effective, recalls something in Meg Merrilies. She is a person of unmistakable ability, but of very limited expression of that ability; of much greater talent than genius; whose excellences are mostly acquired; of greater intellect than feeling; possessed of profound insight into character, rather than inspired with an appreciation of it. She does things by rule; she learns by heart; she studies and perfects herself; she is not of those whose limbs quiver with emotion they know not how, whose eyes light up with a fire that burns within them they know not whence, whose tones speak a passion that descends upon them irresistibly like the afflatus of a god.

## EDWARD EVERETT.

"For Warwick is a subtle orator."

3 *Henry VI.*

THE palmy days of eloquence are past ; the press has become in a great measure the substitute for the orator. Men are no longer stirred up as the Greeks were by Demosthenes, or the Roman populace by Cicero, to the accomplishments of great deeds—the resistance of an invasion, or the suppression of a conspiracy. Peter the Hermit, if he wanted to preach a new crusade, would advocate it in the newspapers, and Kossuth, considered by many the greatest of living orators, derives his fame not so much from his speeches themselves as from their publication next day. Let him who is inclined to doubt this, compare for one moment the effect produced by a leader in the columns of a daily newspaper published in this metropolis, and that of an unreported speech delivered by the most eloquent or the most famous of our orators. Will you tell me that the speeches are reported, and so have their effect ? Yes, but what then becomes of the three essentials of oratory—the action—action—action of Demosthenes ? Delivery, according to Quintilian, is as important to the orator as invention ; but of what importance is delivery to the orator at Washington who addresses us in New York ? What do we care for the

grace or awkwardness, the sluggish or animated manner, the harsh or musical voice of the speakers whose words alone reach us? The orator is on a level with the writer now-a-days. I am indifferent whether Pope was a hunchback or Elia stammered; and who is concerned at the bad delivery of Seward or the false accents of Douglas, when he reads their speeches in the daily prints? If their arguments are cogent, their diction fine, their style pleasing—manner, delivery, action, is of no consequence. And is this oratory! Oratory that moved masses of men; that was invented by the gods; that was compared to the honey of Hybla and the afflatus of Apollo; oratory, that persuades, and excites, and terrifies; oratory like that which was sparkling in Sheridan, and scathing in Randolph, magnificent in Burke, insinuating in Clay, overwhelming in Pitt, and everything all at once in Mirabeau!

True, there are speakers now-a-days—speakers at political meetings and in legislative halls; but these are infinitely more anxious to have their addresses well reported than to produce any effect at the time. Like Mrs. Jellyby, they look entirely beyond their present audience. Which of them expects to influence the sentiments, or the opinions or the conduct of his hearers, by anything he says? Will a vote in Congress be changed because of the numberless harangues that are to take place on the Kansas question? Votes out of Congress may be changed by them; but how many in it? Good speeches may be made there; but if they are good as speeches, it is because the speaker is personally ambitious of oratorical fame, because he wants to be considered a fine orator, not because he expects to convert

his hearers. How different this from the days when a man might hope that his words would incite a nation to a rebellion or a crusade ! These speeches may be listened to, but it will be as an intellectual gratification ; the fine ladies will go to hear as they would to an opera ; the scholars will go to criticise, the political friends and foes to compliment or condemn, but how many to decide upon the point at issue ? So the great incentive to oratory is withdrawn ; if a man feels that he is talking without the prospect of accomplishing anything, if he is merely exhibiting his own graces and talents, he sinks to the level of an actor, and seldom possesses half the skill of the actor in displaying his abilities.

The pulpit, one may say, still offers a field for the orator, and Spurgeon seems to prove it ; but people follow a popular preacher just as they go to the play, for an excitement. He may add to the number of his hearers, but not often to that of his denomination. The pulpit is either so soberly and staidly respectable as to be dull besides, or else affords only a momentary pleasure, sometimes intellectual and refined, sometimes impulsive and emotional. As to any permanent effect it produces, I confess I don't see much. To be sure, there is a natural disinclination to receive the distasteful doctrines we hear in church, and a still greater to follow the hard instructions we receive, which may account for this ; but, whatever the cause, very few pulpit orators expect to convert their hearers, and those few are disappointed. The religious people are those who are educated into their belief, or who become religious from study or natural temperament, not those who are preached into it.

The bar does afford scope for the orator ; limited it

may be, but a talented or skilful orator may hope to change the opinions or influence the verdict of the twelve men in a jury-box ; upon his exertions does depend the success of his cause ; not only mediately his own reputation, but immediately the ruin or fortune of his client ; sometimes the life or death of a human being. Here the opportunity is as great as it was when Cicero spoke for Milo or Demosthenes against Midias ; here there is a field for the display of various abilities, and occasion to call them forth ; here is demand for feeling and earnestness ; and here by consequence we find them. Intellectual effort, of course, is often exhibited in all the courts of law, but only before a jury can the real orator find himself at home.

It is true that there is an immense deal of public speaking in our day ; perhaps more here and now than ever before or anywhere else ; but this is because men like to hear fine things well said ; because the love for oratory is innate, like the gift itself ; because even if any absolute effect is hopeless, those who can speak must do so ; "it is in them," as Sheridan said, "and it must come out of them." And the rest of the world are as bent upon hearing as the orator upon speaking. It is for the gratification of taste, or the excitement of feeling, that we go to hear a great speaker, and it is because he is a great speaker that he declaims ; because he is prompted to it by his nature, because he can do it, because he must do it ; but he would do it vastly better, he would be more in earnest, and we should be more truly moved, if some great thing were to be achieved by his efforts.

But what was to be achieved by Mr. Everett the other

night? The audience had paid their dollar apiece, and he truly said, so far as he was concerned, the object of the occasion was attained before he had spoken a word! What a condition for an orator! But it exemplified entirely what I have been saying; it proved that people went to hear him who is called the greatest American orator, just as they would go to see a great actor; to be gratified or interested; to receive an intellectual entertainment; and that the greatest American orator spoke simply because he could speak well and wanted to; but neither he nor they expected any ulterior results to come of his effort. Nobody will give a penny more to the poor because Mr. Everett lectured on charity. One would be more likely to do this after seeing the "Poor of New York" played. And after hearing the address on Washington, what then? Or after the astronomical oration, or that on agriculture, or that delivered at Dorchester, or that on Columbus, what follows? You are delighted, you retain a vivid recollection of the grace of style and the poetic fancy, and the exquisite diction of the orator; but anything more? Mr. Everett has indeed done much for the memory of Washington. He has paid a splendid tribute to his name, and revived the recollections of his history; he has presented a spectacle to the eyes of the world quite equal to the classic triumphs of antiquity; an eloquent orator journeying all over this broad republic, and summoning the people in every city to pay homage to the memory of its father and founder, he has laid on the tomb of Washington his worthiest eulogy. He has secured that tomb to be the property of the nation, and indissolubly linked his own memory with that of the great

man he commemorates. When pilgrims from all parts of the world shall hereafter visit the spot on the banks of the Potomac, where repose the bones of him whose name and fame are the purest in history, they will fail not to remember that to the oratory and patriotism of Edward Everett they owe the opportunity. This is a worthy object to attain; but it is not attained by the absolute effect the orator produces on his audiences; as far as each audience is concerned, it is attained before they hear the oration.

Mr. Everett is undoubtedly the man of all alive who has made oratory his greatest study; who is most ambitious of the fame of an orator; who risks his reputation upon his oratorical efforts; who bends all his energies and devotes all his faculties to the attainment of such a fame. And he has determined that the bar, the forum, and the pulpit furnish not the widest or the most effective theatre for oratorical display; that no field for an eloquence such as that which roused the Athenians or stirred the Quirites now exists; that elaborate and graceful orations are what will ensure him the greatest fame. And he is right. Some men are more innately orators than he; move their audiences more absolutely; have more of the *action* which constitutes an orator; the live-coal of genius is laid on other lips, the inspiration descends on other frames that are quivering with emotion, and full of that magnetism which is sure to extend to the hearers; but this is all momentary—it passes away and leaves no trace behind; while Mr. Everett's elegant and learned discourses are read next day, and their effect is as great then as it was the night before. Nothing with him depends on manner. To be sure, his



voice is agreeable, his gesticulation graceful, his utterance measured, his bearing dignified, and his action appropriate; but he is not dramatic; his elocution is not overpowering, his feeling not intense; he is no orator as Brutus was; he is not one of those who steal men's hearts or stir their blood, and yet he can create an enthusiasm, he can provoke a tear. His careful recitation of the long oration he has committed to memory, his nicely elaborated periods, his calm delivery, his finished style constitute a different thing from my idea of an orator, full of big, burning thoughts that come out in burning words, with fire in his eye, and fire in his gesture, and fire in his whole frame and fire in his soul. Who could report such a speaker? Now Mr. Everett loses nothing in the report. He is simply a most elegant writer, a master of all the rhetorician's arts, a man of varied acquirements, among them not the least that of moulding into forms of exquisite music and suggestive beauty the choicest words of the English tongue. He is a man of charming fancies, of true, and pure and lofty sentiment, of vivid imagination, of refined taste, but especially gifted with a delicate appreciation of the shades of difference in the significance of words and a marvellous faculty of selecting the very word out of eighty thousand which exactly conveys his meaning. His orations are as carefully joined together as a piece of mosaic work, in which each little stone must be of the very size and color or the effect is lost. Not only in these minutiae, however, is his taste apparent; the selection of his themes, the division of his subjects, their appropriateness to the audiences before whom they are delivered, the fitness of his allusions and ornaments to whatever topic, the chaste, yet ornate beauties of his

style, all these are evidences both of the elaborate care with which he has cultivated his natural gifts, and the taste which must have pre-existed to enable him to cultivate to such good effect.

He has, too, more than beauties of style; he has beauties of thought, beauties which constitute real eloquence; ideas as truly poetical as any you will find in the writings of Spenser, or as exquisitely delicate as the fancies of Keats; he pours out at times a torrent of charming figures, of lively images, of true sentiment all combined, and all wedded to the most musical and most appropriate language; such as I have never heard any other man utter, and such as I believe few living prose writers can equal. In this way is he truly eloquent. Gentle, graceful, sometimes touching, his mind grapples not with great problems, nor seizes upon vigorous or tremendous thoughts. He is no Milton, no Dante, no Shakespeare in prose; but a Gray, a Petrarch, or a Virgil. His intellect resembles that of Cicero in some things, but lacks the profound philosophical turn, the originality of thought, and the energy of the great Roman orator. Sweet and tender at times, trite and tame it must be owned at others, neither uttering new ideas nor suggesting them, not attempting to arouse or excite his hearers, Mr. Everett is yet the finest and most accomplished writer of eloquence that America has produced. Among the speakers, he will not hold so high a rank.

## AMERICAN SCULPTURE.

“ Your gallery  
Have we passed through, not without much content.”

*Winter's Tale.*

SCULPTURE seems to be that form of art in which the American mind finds its most natural development ; that form, also, in which the American mind most delights ; the only form of art in which Europe recognises any excellence in American effort. Whether there is any congruity between the nature of the art and the peculiarities of our national mind ; whether there is a likeness between this embodiment in cold and passionless marble of human passion and human beauty, and the unrest, the excitement, the intensity of the yet undemonstrative American character ; or whether it is a fact that sculpture is an inferior art, as some proclaim, that it never can attain to the excellencies of painting, that it is second to painting, as comedy is to tragedy, it might be hard to say ; but whatever the explanation may be, it is true that we have taken onward steps, and arrived at a degree of excellence in sculpture, that is far enough from being attained in painting. Crawford's death has made a sensation in Europe ; Powers and Greenough are known and admired where Durand and Allston were never heard of. The art, too, is appreciated

among us by many who are blind to the harmonies of color and the exquisite beauties of tone. Form always seems first appreciated in the progress made by a nation in culture. The savages mould clay figures before they attempt to paint; children admire tangible outlines before they recognise the excellencies of color or of light and shade; and sculpture has always first attained perfection in a national history, or at least has first been cultivated. It may be doubted whether the old Greeks ever knew the superlative excellence that since their day has been reached by painters; the stories of their pictorial artists, of Zeuxis and Apelles, all give the idea that imitation was the great desideratum. They tell of grapes painted so that birds would peck at them, and curtains represented on their canvas so that even the judges were deceived, but they had no notion of a higher excellence. They certainly did not conceive of the expression we moderns have infused into music; they dreamed not of harmonic combinations of sounds; and many have doubted whether the harmonic combination of color, the art of putting expression upon canvas, was not also one of those mysteries that the art-loving, art-worshipping Greek never solved. But sculpture reached its efflorescence in antiquity.

The art culminated in the days when the Apollo and the Laocoon were carved. Yet I am far from believing with some, who, by their knowledge and appreciation of the beautiful, are well calculated to judge, that sculpture is inferior to any art. It comes before others in point of time; but the sublimest utterings of poetry always precede the tamer. Homer came before Pindar, Shakespeare before Byron, the Golden Age before the Silver;

invention precedes elaboration; eloquence has never since the days of Demosthenes attained such an excellence or such an influence as it then knew; but is the art inferior because it is a lost one? Shall we affect to undervalue the perfection of the Parthenon because it is the despair of modern builders? The mere fact that sculpture is the first in any national history to be cultivated, does not stamp it as inferior to painting.

And can it be called inferior in beauty or expression, the two objects of all art? To embody the beautiful, to express feeling, I take it to be the aim of art. Sculpture certainly accomplishes both these aims by different means, but quite as fully, quite as admirably, as painting. Who that has looked upon even a cast of the Apollo Belvidere, will say of any canvas that it exceeds the marble, either in beauty or expression? Who that has studied the Laocoon will prefer a picture? I have felt the highest influences of art while gazing on copies from the antique, while studying the Torso, the Niobe, the Venus, but above and beyond anything, the Apollo and the Laocoon; no more wonderful embodiments of passion, no more lofty images of beauty can I conceive of than these. Color gives me no more definite idea than form; it certainly is no more palpable; it is certainly no more ideal than the pale, refined marble. Whether you ask for what shall stand out like an actuality before the bodily eye, or whether you demand what shall satisfy the imagination and elevate the fancy by its exquisite ideality, sculpture will afford it.

So the strivings of America in this direction are no evidences of inferiority; true she has not yet created, probably she never will create another Apollo; we have

not the belief in gods who walk the earth, that the ancients had, to infuse life and divinity into our works. When a modern attempts the classic style, he may be severe and beautiful, but he never is so full of fire, and life and passion, as the old sculptors. The reason is palpable. The ancients believed in the reality of these divinities; they got inspired by their works: the moderns are students only, not worshippers; their fancies are engaged, their passions never. Just as none but a good Catholic could paint a good Madonna, none but a good Pagan could have given that wondrous life and godlike beauty to the Belvidere. The finest modern marbles are the "Christ and His Apostles," of Thorwaldsen; the reason is that Thorwaldsen's feelings and his faith were enlisted in the work. But Americans are no worse off than others when they copy the antique; the rest of the world has fallen away from its belief in those grand old divinities that inspired Homer and Phidias; Canova's Hebe is exquisite, but it is not Hebe; Thorwaldsen's classic bas-reliefs have all the grace, all the exquisite fancy of antiquity, but none of the soul. And all modern statuary is copied after the antique; whether the subject be selected from classic pages or not, the style is always remodelled after classic originals; for classic originals are perfection.

But is, then, sculpture an art which has seen its best days? Lacking the vital breath breathed into it by the olden gods, by virtue of which it became a living soul, must our modern art be only a copy, only a shadow, only a remembrance, an echo—a beautiful transcript, but still a transcript?

American sculpture is as yet nothing more. Craw-

ford, the most classic of our artists, so much admired at Rome, the favorite pupil of Thorwaldsen, he, whose loss the nation now deplores, Crawford, in his noblest efforts, created not. His "Orpheus," one of the finest works of art ever executed by an American, one of the proudest trophies of modern statuary, is nothing but an imitation of the antique. It is exquisitely beautiful, severely classic, recalls vividly to one's imagination the fable of Eurydice, delights the eye, but never has one suggestion of anything more; never elevates, arouses, moves. And say what you will, the calm sense of beauty is good, the delight afforded by perfectness of sound, or form, or color is exquisite; but more even than this is required. Many critics call this demand for something more a vulgar want of excitement: but is it not rather that irrepressible longing of the human heart for something more than human; that reaching out after the infinite, which whether it awakens to sympathy or stirs to exaltation, yet is the noblest thing in man; the spring of his noblest thoughts; the universal aspiration, the craving of the race. This is not satisfied by Crawford.

His "Beethoven" is massive, and grand and severe: you cannot readily find fault with it, since it fulfils all that one requires; but a great genius would do more than you require; it would suggest what never occurred to the critic. If you can measure every excellence of a statue or a poem, it is not divine: if there is not something undefinable, subtle, yet overpowering and irresistible in its influence, or its effect, or its beauty, it belongs not to the first rank. No one can say that Crawford's statue of Beethoven has such influences.

The works of Powers are like Crawford's in one re-

spect, they are beautiful ; but they are not equal to Crawford's, because they have nothing but beauty. The "Greek Slave" is of course exquisite in proportion, and full of grace and softness, yet it lacks expression ; it might be called anything else as appropriately as a Greek slave. I feel always in Mr. Powers's works this want ; in the "Proserpine," in the "Fisher Boy," in the "Eve ;" in his most admired productions there is need of more meaning ; there are outlines and outsides ; representations, not realities ; beautiful exceedingly, but spiritless, all. Other American sculptors excel Powers in this regard : one perhaps excels even Crawford in this single particular ; I mean Horatio Greenough.

I have seen few American sculptures with so much meaning compressed into the marble as Mr. Greenough's. Those familiar with his "Venus Victrix," now in the Boston Athenæum, will remember how instinct it is with expression, how limb and feature both are full of character, and of beauty too ; not, indeed, the exquisite beauty of Powers's works, nor the classic grace thrown around Crawford's productions, but still a beauty undeniable and palpable.

Brackett's "Shipwrecked Mother and Child" is also very full of meaning ; it tells its own story ; it is modern too ; is an indication that the moderns must look to their own life for their subjects, must catch the spirit of their own times, if they hope ever to rival the ancients in this magnificent art, if they would put "life into a stone." The Palmer marbles also indicate this feeling : all of them deviate from the classic model of beauty. The "Indian Girl" is of no Grecian type, is American in conception and idea, as well as in execution ; is, if I



mistake not, the work of one who has studied in no foreign workshops, who certainly is imbued with no classic spirit.

I love the classics, I am sure. I can never hope to derive the satisfaction from half-fledged efforts in any sphere, that absolute perfection must afford ; but my only hope for an American school in art is, that artists will be American ; will live in the present and not in the past. There is enough now and here to inspire them. If they get rid of traditions and shackles, they have a field before them ; and genius is a gift that God vouchsafes in all ages and climes. Here and there, one may see indications of it now.

## WASHINGTON SOCIETY.

“And there live we as merry as the day is long.”

*Much Ado About Nothing.*

ALL the world goes to Washington just before Lent ; and as vagabonds follow the tide, whether it leads to the country or the capital, I went with my fraternity to Washington. There were all the somebodies, and very many of the nobodies ; the latter in large numbers, but the former in larger. There were breakfast parties and dinner parties, day receptions and evening receptions, *matinées dansantes* and balls, suppers without women and women without suppers ; indeed, the whirl was so incessant, that I was at last glad to get out of it, and rest from my labors. We think in New York that we know what gaiety is, but ours is tame by comparison with the intensity of Washington dissipation. We have some sort of a respite during the day. If, at the height of the season, we go to two, and once in a great while, to three parties a night, we lie late next morning, and gather strength for the next night's efforts. But they never sleep in Washington ; tired nature's sweet restorer is not “received” there ; no arrangements are made in regard to her ; you dance at a hall till four o'clock in the morning, and are expected to be prompt at a breakfast with Congressmen who go to the

House at twelve. Now, I have paid visits here on the morrow of the Bachelors' Ball, or some other *récherché* fête, and not found the ladies "at home;" the fatigue incapacitated them for receiving; but in Washington there is a nightly occasion, and a round of visiting besides, which allows you no intermission to recruit. Béranger's Wandering Jew would find himself in company :

———"Toujours, toujours,  
Tourne la terre ou moi je cours,  
Toujours, toujours, toujours, toujours."

The day receptions are pleasant, however; they are not like the *matinées* in New York, attended almost exclusively by the *beau sexe*; you will find a cabinet minister at home with his wife and daughters, and see half a dozen of the most prominent statesmen in the country flirting in the half-light of the parlors, or two or three well-known soldiers hanging over some charmer at the piano. Indeed, the most distinctive feature of Washington society is the presence of men of talent and character. Everybody knows and bewails how much New York society is given up to boys and girls; how few distinguished men are to be seen at our balls; how comparatively lowered the tone of conversation thus becomes; how sadly deficient the most brilliant saloons are in brilliant talkers. Dancers we have in abundance, and here and there a musical house can be pointed out; but the number of ladies who are able to gather around them a circle of prominent or talented men for an evening can be counted on your fingers. They manage these things better in Washington. They

dance there as much and as well as we do ; the people who can do nothing but dance are accommodated ; the Lanciers' music is heard as regularly every night in every parlor as you enter, and as constantly till you leave, as it is here ; but this is not all. Older people, and people who have other than social position, men who have made their mark in the world, are to be seen at all the entertainments ; are not rare enough to be lions ; are the rule rather than the exception. A belle scorns a man who has not something to distinguish him. She demands a name as well as a man ; a name, too, known outside of a single set ; something more than irreproachable manners, faultless toilet and divine dancing ; something more than fortune, or family, or fashion. She may be exorbitant, but she asks for talent, and the distinction which this has brought its possessor ; no inglorious Miltons, no guiltless Cromwells will serve her turn ; the man must have achieved some of his greatness if he hopes to make an impression upon these exacting fair ones. And when statesmen, successful politicians, generals, diplomats, and men of this stamp crowd the rooms, it is impossible that the entire tone of the society they frequent and compose should not be affected. So there is at once dignity and ease, distinction and *savoir faire*. The conversation is finer, and the society is more cosmopolitan ; there is neither the provincial coldness of Boston ; nor the *hauteur* of Philadelphia, nor the pretence of New York manners. The necessities of public life oblige the leaders to be anything but exclusive ; everybody is admitted, but the influence is good, and you see as little bad manners as in the most select circle elsewhere.

Some lament the facility with which the *entrée* to

society is obtained. An American Lady Kew exclaimed to me in horror-stricken tones, that the daughter of one of the members of the cabinet had been seen dancing with a tailor. She didn't know she was telling this to a vagabond. But it is impossible to prevent people who behave well from visiting; the officials must receive; the President's levees are the most accessible of all, and everybody follows his lead. And I really could not perceive the ill effects of the system. Some people, doubtless, learn good manners who have had no previous opportunity; but those who were well-bred before lose nothing by the contact; and you will generally find that those suddenly elevated are extremely anxious to comport themselves so as not to allow others to suspect that their position is a novel one.

One strange etiquette results from this universal democracy; everybody introduces; in every drawing-room you will observe the repetition of the everlasting formula. If you are at a morning visit or an evening ball, it is supposed you want to know every one there, and that every one wants to know you; and you are to remember the introduction and recognise the acquaintance. Nobody asks permission before presenting you to a lady. I was talking with a belle when an ambassador came up to her and said: "One of my attachés is anxious to know you, miss;" and forthwith trotted away to bring up the attaché. So even the foreigners fall into the fashion, and do as the Romans do, when they are at Rome. To be sure, this universality of introductions has its disadvantages; the usage in the best houses here and abroad is preferable; one doesn't want to be forced to know people, especially when such a motley crowd is

“out” as that at Washington; but it has also some counter advantages. It secures a stranger almost immediately the acquaintance of the entire Washington world. Every one who is able to procure an *entrée* has thenceforth admission everywhere; and so many go to Washington merely as transient visitors, and yet are anxious to see its society, that this custom is, on the whole, agreeable. It allows those who are permanently at the capital to meet all the new-comers, and affords the temporary members of the throng opportunity to see all that is to be seen.

The number of disagreeable men in Washington is prodigious. In the first place, many of the prominent people are not necessarily pleasant to meet, yet however disagreeable, must be endured; and then there is a perfect tribe of insipid and ordinary ones, who, I suppose, seem unusually uninteresting, because of the contrast with those who are really brilliant. The men of talent who abound dwarf the noodles; after listening to the conversation of the leader of a party, or one of the master intellects of the country, it is extremely tiresome to return to the nothings inflicted on you by some bore who has an office, or has had one, or expects one. I think I never met so many extremely stupid, and yet perfectly well-bred men, as in Washington. To be sure, that is better than talent and vulgarity: if my associates cannot be both talented and refined, give me the refinement by all means; this affects me, while the talent is a matter that concerns them more. Still, the class of well-bred idiots is distressingly large everywhere, and causes an immense deal of suffering. They would be absolutely intolerable at Washington were it not that the

brilliant people outnumber them. Your chances are really better for meeting a clever person than a fool! Think of that, and remember the mortal hours you have endured in society without encountering a single man or woman with brains.

I met, among other of the clever folk, Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, and Sir Benjamin Backbite. Relations of theirs (the family is a very large one and most respectably connected) visit in New York among our very best people, but I had not previously fallen in with these celebrated individuals in person. They are of course extremely sought after, and from their position and fashion, give the tone to much of the society. Consequently people are more talked of even than in New York. (Monstrous as this assertion seems, I am sure it is warranted.) I relish gossip myself, and even a touch of scandal doesn't spice the dish too highly for my taste, though I only indulge in this luxury in private; but the rage for picking one's neighbor to pieces is so prodigious at the capital, that even the Vagabond was amazed. Parties are pronounced bores before you leave them, and your character is discussed while you are on the opposite side of the room. The men are quite as much given to the practice as the women; they dissect their dearest friends with as much skill and alacrity as the bitterest female does her bosom companion; I heard just as much ill-natured talk at dinners and suppers from which women were excluded, as took place even at receptions where the Vagabond was the only man present.

On one of these last mysterious occasions, where I was assisting to receive, there occurred the most delight-

ful circumstance imaginable : a complete discussion of three widow ladies who assume to prune the visiting list of an ambassador lately arrived, and who of course is as yet ignorant of the standing of many who have left cards at his door. I strongly suspected that several of the dear creatures who were freest in their comments upon the widows, were themselves excluded from the ambassador's balls. At any rate, they couldn't have said anything more severe if they had been. While their conversation was at its height, a bevy of beaux arrived, and these were forthwith informed of the subject of talk. They were very anxious to know who the widows were, probably with a view to paying their court ; but Lady Sneerwell would not tell, and Mrs. Candour could not ; the utmost they could be induced to disclose in identification, was that one of the widows was she whose receptions were so universally popular, and who had allowed a distinguished civilian to close her shutters at one o'clock in the morning.



## PRE-RAPHAELITISM.

“ In our fine arts, not imitation, but creation, is the aim.”

EMERSON.

AFTER studying “ The Anti-Puseyite Lady” and “ The Eve of St. Agnes,” till I thought myself fully aware of their aim, and able to appreciate their execution, I went the other day to Mr. Bryan’s gallery, to compare the real Pre-Raphaelites with their imitators. I was struck immediately, as I had often been before, not with the exactness of detail, not with the truthful attention to exterior nature, not even with the uncouth drawing, and stiff, angular outlines of the old artists, but with the spirit that animated those outlines, and gave life and meaning to those details; with the religious fervor of Giotto, and the earnestness of Cimabue; with the simple, heartfelt energy of Guido di Sienna; with the reverent, pious feeling of them all. This is in reality what gives the predecessors of Raphael all their power, this is what makes them now, after the lapse of centuries, acknowledged as true artists. This is what the modern Pre-Raphaelites profess to aim at; this is all that makes the theory of the new school anything more than realism; this is what the practice of the new school fails to attain.

Its disciples rival their models in the careful delineation

tion of trivialities ; they will paint you the back of a chair that shall be carved as finely as the work of Albrecht Dürer, or the elaborate embossment in the pictures of Giotto ; they will mark every sheep in a pen with his brand, and dot the earth everywhere that a sunbeam flickers through the leaves ; they will count the hairs like Denner, and mark each shred of grass like Valkenburgh ; but they have not the motive that the old painters had. Their art is not religious. No modern art is religious. People paint no pictures for cathedrals, they carve no images of saints which they afterwards adore ; or if a man happens to work on an altar-piece, he looks not upon the purpose as sanctifying the labor. The spirit that animated the real Pre-Raphaelites does not exist ; it is dead and buried, and even the eloquent conjurations of a Ruskin can evoke nothing but its ghost.

The disciples of the Oxford graduate are then realists ; the doctrine of the Oxford graduate, if it lose this only savor wherewith it should be salted, is realism ; and though its apostle claims for Pre-Raphaelitism that it possesses the saving savor, it is only a claim, and one which neither the doctrine nor its results can establish. The theory that truth is in art of more importance than beauty is not correct ; the notion that beauty should be sacrificed to truth—harsh, bare, repelling truth, is itself at once unlovely and untrue ; the teaching that nature is always, and under all circumstances, to be scrupulously copied is false. Nature is often unlovely, and its effects disagreeable ; truth to nature, under such circumstances, is falsehood to art ; and though eloquence, and sophistry, and rhetoric be employed, with all the splendid talent of one of the greatest masters of English prose, they can-

not upset the notions that mankind has held for centuries. What, indeed, in any art, would you do with plain, bare nature? Would you have the sculptor carve out the grossnesses and imperfections of the human form? Would you have him represent the moles and pimples, the coarse flesh and the dirt of the "Fisher Boy," or the "Torso?" would you have the poet put the foul and common language of the stews or the market into the mouth of his Dogberries and Pistols? Would you have a comic actor represent all the odious vulgarities, the revolting indecencies of low life? This is not art: art, whose aim is to elevate, not to debase, to ennoble and refine, not to belittle and render coarse; whose object is the beautiful; the true, certainly, but not all that is true; truth in expression, but not in the expression of what is mean and common; truth in the representation of nature and character, but not nature that is disgusting, nor character that is ordinary. If you paint me tin pans and carpets, you may do it well; but you are not an artist for all that. If we want nothing more of painters than absolute representations of old buildings, or copies of oak trees and fern leaves, Pre-Raphaelitism is very well; but if artists are to awake emotions, to excite sentiments, to arouse feeling, then Pre-Raphaelitism is not well.

For there is a higher truth than that of detail, there is a higher truth than that which is apparent in conformity to outsides, which consists in daguerreotyping or mirroring external objects; there is a truth of sentiment, a truth of feeling. The artist must catch this higher truth, must put meaning into his brooks and trees, expression into his forms and features, must infuse a spirit or a thought into his work; else it is but sounding brass

and tinkling cymbal. If the life is more than meat or the body than raiment, then is the thought of man worth more than its dress; then is the ideal loftier than the real. It is all very well to ridicule the notion of improving upon nature, to laugh at the presumption of those who you say attempt it; but will you accept coarse, ordinary nature, or look you for that nature not to be found every day nor everywhere? Will you have nature in which a divinity is incarnate, or nature like that of the brutes that perish? If a man in search of common truths fail to notice higher ones, he is as far out of the way as he who sees none at all. Would you be blind to the light of the stars, and see only sticks, and clods, and stones?

This fault I find with the Pre-Raphaelite brethren—that their doctrine leads directly to a worship of the material; to an ignoring of the ideal; to putting out-sides and externals on an equality with the essential and superior. This one would say after studying the doctrine in the expositions made by its chief and self-appointed advocate. He who should read Mr. Ruskin's "Modern Painters," with the subsequent pamphlet and lecture on Pre-Raphaelitism, must come to the conclusion, without seeing the pictures, that all this tends to realism. To be sure, there are denials of the tendency; there are contradictions innumerable; there are deifications of invention, and hymns to imagination; but for all this, the only logical deductions from the reasoning are in favor of realism.

And if this is the notion you get from the eloquent defence of the school, how firmly is it fixed by the sight of the works themselves. What do you see in all these

careful pictures but the most marvellous accuracy, the greatest degree of mechanical skill, the most remarkable imitation, the most painstaking assiduity, the same traits that enable a man to weave a Brussels carpet, or an old woman to put together a patchwork bed-quilt? Do you call painting a tree, in which every leaf is marked out, art? Do you call the delineation of every figure in a tapestry, of every blade of grass in a meadow, art? What end is attained by this? What sentiment does such a picture inspire? What emotion does it awake? What beauty does it present to the soul? You may look at these elaborate photographs all day, and get no ennobling feeling from them. There is a certain excellence in their correct copying; but, again and again, imitation is not art. This will do for those who can accomplish nothing more; but it goes so far and no farther. The men without genius may give themselves up to it if they will, but when the real magician comes along, we shall all cry out, with the old Egyptians: "This is the finger of God."

I see few excellencies in the Pre-Raphaelites peculiar to themselves; while their faults are all their own. They overlook great things in search of small; they are really untrue to nature, for all their hue and cry about truth: their perspective is untrue. No human being distinguishes distant objects with the same degree of accuracy as near ones; no human being could perceive leaves and flowers at the distance represented in many of these pictures. Then, many of them, in aiming at certain traits of the older artists, have caught faults and mannerisms instead of excellences. They all fail in embodying that religious feeling which Ruskin says truly

is the great distinguishing characteristic of Giotto and his contemporaries; they, many of them, imitate the bad drawing, the angular outlines, the harsh, stiff attitudes, the uncouth appearance of the old pictures; and they lack tone always and altogether; while their merits are such as all the world shares. When a Pre-Raphaelite is a man of genius, in so much as he exhibits that genius, he deviates from the strict rules of his school. When he does anything great, he ceases to be peculiar; he does what other great artists have done before. For instance, the expression of the "Ophelia" of Hughes is very sad and sweet; the vacant look, the mournful attitude, and the entire sentiment of the picture are admirably expressive, or indicative, rather, of the character and fate of the fair Ophelia; but these characteristics the picture would possess if Pre-Raphaelitism had never been heard of. The truly admirable things in Madox Brown's "Lear," are the attitude of the crazed old king, the straw stuck into his grey locks, and the drawing of his weary limbs; but what of these did the artist owe to Pre-Raphaelitism? Here he had to resort to imagination; here he did—not what Mr. Ruskin so often insists the artist should do, represent what he saw; not what did exist, but what he imagined *ought* to exist. In "The Light of the World," Pre-Raphaelitism dictated the flowers so elaborately drawn and colored, the curious workmanship of the Saviour's robes, and the general quaintness of treatment; but not the expression of the Christ, not the sentiment of the picture, not the really beautiful traits of the work.

I leave to the ardent admirers of the new school, the "Monarch Oak," a fair sample of its monstrosities, the

“Two and a Half Years Old,” and the “Home from Sea.” Whoever can admire such pictures as these is too far gone for me to argue with ; whoever believes them, as I do, to be legitimate results from the teaching of the school, will either receive that teaching implicitly, or else reject entirely that which puts flowers and humanity in the same scale ; that which appreciates a stick as highly as a soul, and lavishes as much labor on the portraiture of a pan as Da Vinci would have bestowed on the “Last Supper,” or Raphael on a picture of the Fornarina.

## MRS. KEMBLE.

"In the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness."—*Hamlet*.

I KNOW of no one who has acquired and begot this temperance of which Hamlet speaks, in the same degree with Mrs. Kemble ; I know of nothing that more exactly describes the style and school of elocution in which she excels, than this advice to the players. The Kembles all believed that dignity and grace and taste could be combined with the expression of the intensest feeling ; they all acted upon this belief. They never relinquished their stately demeanor for effectiveness ; they never sacrificed their elegance to rant ; they were well-bred when they raged, and measured when they wept. And their representative is faithful to the traditions of her race. She too preserves the music of intonation in the most tremendous outbursts of passion, and forgets not her art when her genius is most apparent. For it was the peculiarity of this extraordinary family, that its members combined great art with undoubted genius ; they were not of the cold, unimpassioned sort who elaborate sounding declamation without feeling it ; who portray and copy life, but are not themselves alive ; they infused meaning and expression into their eloquent tones and



graceful attitudes ; their taste added a crowning ornament to their feeling, but interfered not with its utterance or embodiment. Mrs. Kemble is a true Kemble in this ; it is impossible to hear and see her without appreciating at once her exquisite skill and her magnetic influence.

Yet with her, as it was with the other Kembles, art is supreme ; if the two come in collision, nature must give way. I like nearly as well as its most devoted admirers, the style of this school ; I believe that grace and dignity can be combined with passion and feeling ; I delight in the music of elocution, and am gratified by the stately walk and dignified postures of these commanding forms. I appreciate, I think, the cadences of poetry, and do not call Shakspeare less true to nature when he writes in blank verse than in prose ; for there is a higher than an every-day nature that answers back to these exalted influences. It is this nature in us that admires the ideal in art ; that frowns on materialism ; that is affected by the truthfulness of Lear and Raphael, by the music of Mozart and the readings of Mrs. Kemble. Though these geniuses do not represent human nature in her coarsest or commonest garb, though they lift us up for a time into a higher sphere, we feel that they do not transgress the promptings of nature, that they are truthful, that they are *natural*, as well as impressive and effective.

Yet John Kemble was supreme till Kean came, and then the sceptre departed from Judah. You could imagine nothing finer than Kemble's Hamlet, till you had felt the influence of Kean's Richard or Othello ; and exalting and refining as are the readings of Mrs. Kemble, I like her better as a reader than as an actress. I

mean that her intellectual powers are greater than her dramatic ones ; I mean that when she reads something like Clarence's dream, which cannot be acted, she is inimitable, but that I have known others move me more in the rendering of Richard in the tent scene of the same play. You feel no lack if you have not seen or heard these others who are transcendent ; but if you have, the Kembles pale their uneffectual fires.

There are two sorts of reading ; one elocutionary and the other dramatic. In the former, Mrs. Kemble is absolutely unapproachable ; in the latter, she probably excels any one else, but she becomes so much of an actress that it is impossible not to contrast her with other actors who, in their turn, excel her. Of course, it is unfair to make the comparison ; for in the reading of an entire play, it is impossible for any one to become so completely identified with a single part as in acting it. Doubtless, Mrs. Kemble could give every passage with greater effectiveness and intensity were she playing the rôle ; but it belongs to her style to stop short of the absolute abandonment of passion ; she maintains the temperance and smoothness in the very whirlwind ; she never loses her self-control when her excitement is at the highest pitch ; she never becomes absolutely the individual whom she represents. Now, I believe that perfection in the histrionic art is not reached until the performer thinks and feels, for the time, that he is Richard or Desdemona ; till he ceases to imitate, and feels instead of feigns ; till he no more restrains himself than a man in a real passion does : yet if he be a genius, this abandonment, absolute as it is, shall still be lofty and magnificent as well as effective.

I repeat it is unfair to compare Mrs. Kemble's reading with another's acting; but it is the highest compliment I can pay her. Without the adventitious aids of dress and scenery, she is able to bring up the various individuals of the play nearly as vividly as a stage full of performers. You see and hear Othello and Iago, Richard and Lady Anne, Prospero and Ariel. You cannot avoid criticising her as an actress; for she possesses the marvellous faculty of expression in face and form, that is as necessary to an actress as intellect or voice, and contributes as much to success as either. She has also the power which the very greatest geniuses of the stage possess, not only of enchaining the attention, but compelling an unconscious imitation of her looks in those of her hearers. I have at times caught myself responding to her expression or copying with my own features the varying emotions depicted on her mobile countenance.

Then I knew that I had been not only absorbed but forced into a state of subjection to her genius; and looking around I saw the entire audience also subject. When she expressed anger, they looked angry; when she portrayed fear, they looked fearful. They were *en rapport* with her; she swayed them at her will, as the skillful magnetizer does his patient. This is a power that the very greatest histrionic geniuses, and only the greatest, wield. Rachel, Grisi, and young Booth exert it; and its possession alone stamps Mrs. Kemble a woman of genius.

Then how wonderfully her face expresses passion! how radiant it becomes with that highest beauty, of soul! The features, which in repose are too massive and heavy to be absolutely beautiful, then assume a life and spirit that transcend all other beauty. You wonder not at

Othello's love when she looks Desdemona ; you can pardon Desdemona's infatuation when she beams out the passion of the Moor. I think the most magnificent intensity of expression I ever saw in her, was that which accompanied the death of Desdemona—the awful attitude of Othello as he held the smothered victim down, and the black frown that indicated he was a murderer. This followed so instantly on the last shriek of Desdemona that the scene was brought as vividly before the imagination as on the stage. I have never seen an Othello or a Desdemona equal it.

This reminds me of what is the most remarkable thing connected with these readings. I mean the versatility of feeling which enables Mrs. Kemble to throw herself so instantly from one character into another ; to share alike the fear of Desdemona and the determination of Othello ; the scorn of Gloster and the hate of Margaret of Anjou. This compensates for the occasional lack of intensity—is, indeed, incompatible with it. It affords the listener a more continued gratification, a more even one than he can ever have in a theatre ; for no play can ever be so well rendered throughout as Mrs. Kemble reads it. We are bored by no miserable creatures in the subordinate parts ; she is sure to be well supported ; she reads every line exquisitely ; and as Shakspeare is so crammed with meaning, and wit and poetry, 'tis doubly delightful to have every shade of expression so fitly rendered.

This versatility makes her comic readings to the full as great a pleasure as her tragic ones ; she gives the drunken scene of Cassio delightfully ; she renders the jibes of the young Duke of York, the childish, pettish tones of the boy,

quite as well as the deep mutterings of his hunchback uncle. Indeed I think her more delightful still in comedy than in tragedy; the intensity there is not needed; and it is impossible to conceive of anything more exquisite than her "Midsummer Night's Dream." All the delightful poetry is poetically read: the humor of Bottom and the malice of Puck, the grace of Titania, are made realities to the imagination and to the ear, if not to the eye; indeed, more palpable to the sight, as they are expressed on her changing features, more real than if they were portrayed by people of ordinary talent, who would only disenchant you when they essayed to deceive.

In passages indicative of tenderness, of love, of deep but not harsh feeling, the wealth of passion lavished by Romeo and Juliet, the manly ardor of Othello, the touching address of Wolsey to Cromwell, and the death scene of Katherine of Arragon, she is as admirable as can be desired. In Henry VIII., of course, she reminds one of Miss Cushman, and seems to me to possess more feeling. Miss Cushman's taste and intellect are quite as remarkable as those of Mrs. Kemble; but the Englishwoman is more of a woman. She can be touching, she can move to tears, when the other would only provoke to admiration. Her forte is not so much the terrible and harsh emotions, not the awful fright of Richard or the hurry of the battle scene, not the intense malignity of Iago or the bursts of rage in Lear; she does not occasion these shocks of strange delight that some actors cause, but in the rendering of familiar or tender passion, in graceful comedy, in tasteful poetry, in versatility, and in the general pleasure she affords, Mrs. Kemble must stand unrivalled. I can imagine no

more intellectual gratification than her reading, no finer lesson to the taste; and if at times I fancy that I might experience a more acute sensation than she excites, I certainly can seldom know a more refined or loftier pleasure.

## AMERICAN BELLES.

"Examine other beauties."

*Romeo and Juliet.*

I HAVE been jilted of late ; so if I write snappishly or spitefully, my readers are forewarned, and can take their *granum salis*. At any rate, I shall write with feeling. You will think so, for I had intended to say my say about an opera to-day, and had even written the title at the top of my page ; but the uppermost emotion would have its way ; so I scratched out "The Huguenots," and set down instead "American Belles."

Emerson says in one of his essays : "A beautiful woman is a picture which drives all beholders nobly mad." I have seen several beautiful women, and consequently, according to Emerson, been driven mad several times. Now when one gets sane after his noble madness, or when one thinks he is sane (for they say the taint of lunacy is never removed, and after a while the old disease is sure to return with redoubled virulence), his experience is useful to the doctors. He may serve as a warning, to point out to others how they shall escape his fate. His treatment, too, may teach what regimen is to be avoided and what to be essayed. Pelican-like, then, picking my own breast to feed the curiosity of my readers ; poet-like, drawing from my own feelings to

make my strain more truthful, I begin. *Musa ! mihi causas memora !*

American belles ! belles like Beatrice, so queenly, and tall, and elegant and fascinating ; belles like Norah, with dark, flashing eyes, and merry laugh, and shrewd sense and keen wit ; belles like Cornelia, sumptuous, and superb and lazy ; belles like Kitty, dashing, and racy, and brilliant and coquettish ; belles like them all— inclined to flirt, inclined to be fast. The characteristics I first mentioned are such as any woman may share ; are not peculiar to Americans. French women are gay, English women are voluptuously formed, Spanish women are bewitching and Italian women are brilliant ; but if American belles can be distinguished, as a class, by any traits peculiarly their own, it is by their love of flirtation and of frolic. Other belles, when they play with men at the dangerous game of love, play in earnest ; their passions get involved instantly ; they cannot touch the edged tools without cutting themselves ; and therefore other women are more closely, and scrupulously and wisely guarded than ours. But an American girl can touch the brink of all we love without falling over ; can engage in a desperate flirtation without feeling one spark of passion, and without eliciting one in her partner. Is this because she is incapable, or cold ? I recollect reading some French book that treated of American society, and nothing surprised the foreigner like this facility of flirtation ; the very word as well as the theory was unknown to him. There is no equivalent for it in that language, which has a word for every shade of feeling, for every idea of society, for every phase of thought. So my Frenchman adopted



our phrase, and spelt it *fleur-técheune* ; but a *fleur-técheune* is not flirtation. No Frenchwoman could realize even from the vivid description of her countryman the possibility of such a delightful state of affairs as exists here.

For it certainly is delightful. You have all the pleasure of love ; all the piquant, interesting charm of *la belle passion*, without any of the painful intensity. A man and woman may like each other well enough to spend many a pleasant hour together ; may even prefer each other to any one else they have met ; may be good friends—ay, they may even be and do all this, and be young besides, and yet not be plunged into that horrible gulf of love, which has no pleasure, only a painful one. At least, this is possible in America. Romeo and Juliet, I know, foolish creatures ! could not see each other without going madly to work and loving ; but two young Americans in their position, meeting at a ball, would have been content with a flirtation. They would have said, perhaps, as pretty things as Miss Capulet and Mr. Montague did at the masquerade, but they would have stopped short of the hand-kissing ; they would only have talked of it. And can any one imagine an American belle standing on her balcony after a party, and ranting about a beau who had just been introduced to her, as Juliet did about Romeo ? Can any one imagine a member of the Union Club clambering over into the back yard of a family with whom his own was not on speaking terms, and eavesdropping while the belle apostrophized him in rhapsodic strains ? How much more sensible for these young people, who are just as handsome and agreeable as the Veronese couple, to dance “The Lanciers,” and promenade the avenue (not arm

in arm), to visit and be visited at the opera, to go out with a *chaperone* or without, according as mamma is rigid or not—how much more sensible than to take poison, and go down into vaults, to visit friars' cells, to fling themselves on the earth, to die for each other, and all that. My modern pair, after a few months' very violent flirtation, after dancing indefatigably together an entire season, after being seen in public invariably at the same time and place, after exciting some little talk among their set, suddenly subside; and, though they are good friends thereafter, neither suffers from the subsidence. The young man devotes himself more attentively to business, or to some other charmer, of another style; the belle accepts the richest or the most distinguished of her admirers; and there is a great wedding, a *matinée dansante*, to which Mr. Montague will certainly be invited.

The trouble is that a belle must carry on several flirtations at once. Every young lady in society finds at least a single admirer; but the popular one, the particularly rich, the particularly beautiful, the particularly fascinating one has a host, each waiting to take his turn. This is probably very agreeable to her, but I am sure it is distasteful to the worshippers: I myself never enjoy a ball or a party while I am in love; for I am a man of taste, and always fall in love with belles; I can't expect to monopolize the attention of a brilliant girl during an entire evening, and I don't like to see her dancing with a better-looking man than myself. I vastly prefer a morning visit, when nobody else is likely to come in, and I never choose reception days. I think a box at the opera infinitely better than a soirée, even if I am the escort. But the skilful manner in which a professed belle plays off

her different attendants; the tact with which she will distribute a smile to one, a look to another, and a word to a third, each fancying that nobody else gets such a look, such a smile, so soft a glance, so low a tone—this is amazingly interesting when you are only a looker-on. The belle does not intend to be coquettish; she really likes all the fellows, but for different reasons; one is so handsome, another so good-natured, another so clever; Tom sends her such bouquets, and Ned is an old friend of the family, while Mr. Montague is so much admired by all the girls, and especially by Rosalind, that she must keep him at her shrine. Thus she has a reason for being civil, ay, more than civil, to each; besides, they all like her, they all are her friends, and she can't be so ungrateful as to wound their feelings; so she keeps them dangling.

American girls are very good-natured, you see. They all have good hearts, though not very warm ones; they would not do much for a friend; you couldn't expect them to make a great exertion or a great sacrifice in your behalf, but they appreciate what you do for them; they wouldn't stop a bit of scandal about an acquaintance, but they wouldn't set one in motion. There are hateful, malicious ones, who possess the dangerous gift of wit, and spit out spiteful words in your face; who say things that make a man feel very unpleasant, and which he can't resent because they are said by a woman; but these are few. Most girls are not brilliant enough to say such things; their wit is only sportive; and most of them would not willingly give pain; they may sometimes quiz you to your face, and boast of it afterwards, but not often; they may laugh at a man's peculiarities

and foibles when he is away, but that is fair; the men talk up the women as well—I can vouch for it; we know all your weak points, darlings; don't flatter yourselves that you escape. Sometimes, after you have been snuffing up the incense of adoration for a whole evening, two or three of your admirers will go home together, and as they stop to take a cigar, or a supper, after a starvation party, say how badly you were dressed, or how awkward you moved in "The Lanciers;" they don't admire your singing, or you are pretty, but you know it too well.

All the belles are fast; married or single, in their first winter, or almost *passée*, the beauties and the wits, all the women who make a sensation in society are *prononcée*; perhaps only a little so, but they must be distinguished from the rest to be belles; they must dare do things that the others will not do; they must have more manner, more confidence, very likely more cleverness, but all this makes them rather fast. Perhaps I do not choose my word with sufficient care; perhaps there is none that exactly expresses what I mean. But is it not true that those who are most admired, who are most invited, who are never neglected at a ball, and always have a crowd around them at the opera, are those who flirt most, who talk most, who laugh most, who go out most, who accept most attentions, who are called by the men, not only brilliant, but fast.

The greatest southern belle whom I have known was a woman of large fortune, and used—as all belles are not—from her earliest years, to the highest companies. She had been abroad, spoke several languages, danced divinely, and was rather good-looking, when well dressed. But she lived at a hotel, and told me of changing the

gentlemen's boots at night, as they stood at their doors to be cleaned; she told me of wearing men's clothes; she went to the Jardin Mabille in Paris—I have her description of the scene now in a letter before me; she said the severest and rudest things to people; in fact, she said some to me. Yet this lady has a position that none can gainsay, and never was seen without a train of admirers.

The western belles talk loud, laugh loud, walk fast, go everywhere, do everything, without being immodest or vulgar; they are decidedly *piquant* in their daring, like Di Vernon or Lady Gay Spanker, and sure always to make an impression. I remember seeing the daughter of a United States senator, for a wager, order a drink at the bar of the Astor House; and she tossed it off bravely too.

The New York belles are by no means of this sort; are undoubtedly well-bred, can be dignified when they choose; but the enthusiasm of the American character may be seen in their manners, subdued in a degree by elegant associations; still, they lack repose. They like Verdi's music, and prefer the "Trovatore" to "The Huguenots;" they think "Stride la Vampa" superb, but the romanza of Raoul tame.

## CARL FORMES.

"Either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral."

*Hamlet.*

HOWEVER much one may dislike to own it, there can be no doubt that the opera is rapidly supplanting the drama in the estimation of the cultivated part of mankind. As long ago as Voltaire's time, indications of this state of affairs were perceived by that astute observer, who declared that "the most sublime tragedy and the most artful comedy are not so frequently revisited by the same person as an indifferent opera." A critical judgment must indeed always place the intellectual merits of the drama above the effeminate charm of the opera; and for myself, much as I enjoy the delights afforded by music, I reckon the highest pleasures of the theatre superior, simply as pleasures. There is, after all, nothing but sense and passion gratified by music, but in the theatre intellect also is called in play; and, if you lose the exquisite raptures that tickle your ear, at least as intense an emotion is excited, one that compensates for the lack of sensual titillation. Still, the highest dramatic sort of entertainment is very rare, and ordinary theatrical performances cannot be compared with second-rate operatic amusements. I had rather hear Labocetta than see Miss Logan; I had rather hear an indifferent opera than see an indifferent play: I can get some plea

sure out of the one, while the other is an unmitigated bore. The great world agrees with me and Voltaire; it frequents the Academy in crowds, and straggles in only occasionally to the finest performances at the theatre.

As a result of this, great artists will prefer the operatic stage: one would rather be appreciated by those best qualified to judge; one would rather display his talents before the most distinguished audiences; and, unless the actor can compel crowds to follow him like those that attend Ristori or Rachel, he must do as Formes does, and sing; that is, if, like Formes, he happens to possess a magnificent voice. For the great basso was intended by nature for an actor rather than a singer; his musical abilities are uncommonly fine, but they are quite thrown into the shade by his dramatic ones; he himself enjoys acting more than singing, and we go away from his performances thinking much more of what we have seen than of what we have heard, superb as the last may have been. In fact, there are times when his acting is so excellent that it absolutely interferes with your appreciation of the music; it distracts your attention; you are watching the comic face of Basilio when you should be listening to the notes of "La Calunnia;" you are laughing at Leporello when you should be enjoying the song of his master. However, if Formes had been merely an actor, he would have delighted smaller audiences; he would have been a German actor, and appeared only in German theatres, and mostly before the middling class of people; whereas, by leaping on the operatic stage, he secures every nation for hearers, and accomplished people all over the world for admirers. He does not, however, fail to affect all sorts of people. My barber is

in raptures with him as well as my minister ; I have heard them both praise him, though one heard him in .. "Martha" and the other in "The Messiah."

Things have changed since Addison's day ; the sneering tone in which he wrote of Nicolini, the he-singer, is not that in which the critics have discussed Carl Formes. The genius and the art of this last comer have done much to elevate the consideration and position of operatic artists. No person of sense or taste can see the great basso and not acknowledge him to be a man of more than ordinary abilities ; and not acknowledge that he is in exactly the sphere for which nature intended him ; can possibly rank him with the singers in the pope's chapel, or the Nicolinis who used to scramble on the stage with lions. If then it is apparent that all these gifts could not have been lavished on a man for naught, if he is possessed of gifts that can be exercised in no other way than on the operatic stage, if he does exercise them there in the most splendid manner, who shall deride or despise him or his calling ? You may laugh at some of the drunken or foppish tenors who spend their lives in squabbling and squalling ; but don't confound true artists with fools who happen to possess a voice. Voice and genius are very distinct qualities : I enjoy the gratification one affords me, but I reverence the other. I see no reason why a genius for the stage should be denied the personal appreciation which it sometimes covets more than the applause of theatres. If a man is a gentleman, or a true man, his being an actor is no more against him than his being a pork-merchant surely. And yet, fools rush in where angels would—get the door shut in their faces.



When I first heard Formes sing the incantation music of "Robert le Diable," and saw him compel Alice to descend from her post at the foot of the cross; when I first listened and looked while he pleaded with Robert in the grand trio of the same opera, and with all a father's earnestness, and all a demon's intensity, besought the son; when I heard his suspiration of gratified hate at overcoming the Norman peasant; when I watched his attitudes so full of meaning and passion, his looks so intent and devilish, his hands so expressive in their play, his stride, the sweep of his robes, the very toss of his hair, and the instinctive, nervous twitchings of his limbs, I recognised the true dramatic nature. More than this, however; Formes has a nature that seeks expression not only in form and face, but in song as well: though with him, song is but one part of a stupendous whole. His voice, so rich, so full, so melodious (when true), so sweet, but above all so sympathetic, is fitly joined to such abilities as he possesses. It is natural for him to sing; he sings to give vent to his feelings; you do not perceive the absurdity of opera while you listen to his notes; you are not amazed that Bertram calls the guilty nuns to earth by means of song, or that Plunket tells his love to Nancy in involuted strains. He so feels the music that he makes his audience feel it too. He takes you up along with him into the region where all these things are possible and probable; where demons cry to their sons in heart-rending trios, and valets shudder in terrific tones; where Mozart and Meyerbeer lived when they composed, where great artists live when they embody great ideas, where you and I must follow these geniuses if we would appreciate their efforts. Formes

catches us all up into this region; he wakes an ennobling fire in the dullest listener; he sends an emotion to the coldest looker-on. It is this magnetic influence which we feel, which he feels, which is exerted by glance and tone and action, that constitutes his power. He does not possess it in the same degree as some that I have watched; he is not the greatest of actors, but he is yet truly great; he does not so completely absorb as to make you utterly indifferent to everything and everybody else on or off the stage; but he compels your attention, and he is sure to repay it.

His versatility is, perhaps, more wonderful than his electric influence. His tragic powers are great, as who can doubt that has seen his attitudes and action in the third act of "Robert," or his painfully life-like representation of terror in the finale of "Don Giovanni?" But his comic abilities are still finer. He enters into fun with a greater zest even than that which he bestows upon the loftier parts. I was in the *coulisses* on the night of his débüt, and saw him stalk loftily alone, while waiting for his cue, evidently imbued with the spirit of Bertram, looking and feeling devilish enough; but I have also, from the stage boxes, seen him brimful of the most exuberant fun in the entr'actes of a comic opera; while that he fully appreciates the mirth of Plunket or Leporello none will doubt who have seen "Martha" or "Don Giovanni." He seems boiling over with nonsense. He convulses the house, and is himself convulsed; he is as droll as Hudibras and as comic as Gabriel Ravel, and alas! occasionally coarse. I have seen him guilty of vulgar humor; the gobbling up of the maccaroni in "Don Giovanni," though it is traditional, is disgust-

ing, and entirely unworthy a great artist like Carl Formes.

I have called him an artist ; and he is an artist as well as a genius. He omits no detail of dress or manner ; he never forgets his rôle, he never remembers himself ; he is completely absorbed bodily and mentally in his part. It is not Formes, but Georgio in "I Puritani," or Rocco in "Fidelio," that you see. Every motion, every look is in character. His by-play is quite as effective as his great points ; indeed, he makes but few startling points ; it is the uniform excellence of his acting that delights you. He never excites those shocks of emotion, whether comic or tragic, that the very greatest geniuses alone can cause, but he always gratifies you ; if he reaches not the absolute superlative, his comparative merits will suffer by juxtaposition with those of very few.

His excellence is, however, not only perceptible in the careful attention to what another would consider trivialities, not only in the painstaking appreciation of details, not only in producing quiet touches, but in the large conception he takes of a part, in the admirable manner in which he seizes hold of the thought of the composer. He enters into the very spirit of the music, whether it is buffo or serious. He makes Leporello not a mere vulgar buffoon, but a man of the world although a valet ; a shrewd, vain, cowardly, affectionate, even reverential fellow. He discovers traits in the music of the rôle that no one else had detected before ; he elevates the character into the region of high comedy, and at last finds out how to harmonize this light, ridiculous creature with some of the grandest music of Mozart. He feels how unfit were the chatterings and grinnings of former Le-

porellos for the sublime finale of "Don Giovanni," and substitutes for them a representation of terror that I do not scruple to say enhances the effect even of Mozart's music; that is in admirable keeping with the spirit this would awaken; that is at once profound in conception and nearly unequalled in the representation.

I have persisted in considering the musical abilities of Formes as entirely secondary to his dramatic ones. I enjoy his singing as much as that of any basso who has preceded him in America; the superiority of his voice being especially apparent in the Libertad duo of "I Puritani," where its fluent sweetness as a basso cantante, its sympathetic tones and its flexibility are most remarkable; in the concluding trio of Robert, where its passionate intensity seems to culminate, and in the third act of the same opera, where it assumes entirely the character of a basso profundo, and surpasses any other ever heard here, in compass, if not in volume; but his singing is sometimes forgotten for his acting; it is entirely subordinate to the grand effect; it is not, in fact, so perfect as his acting, for he sometimes sings false; but he never acts false.

## RACHEL.

"Il faut donc quitter tout."

**SHE** who so often simulated death, has succumbed to the reality ; she who studied the workings of poison in the hospitals of Paris, and portrayed them with such terrible life-likeness, has passed through an agony fiercer than she had feigned ; she who was wont to cry with such harrowing accents, in the last act of "*Adrienne*," "*Je suis si jeune, et la vie s'ouvre pour moi si belle !*" has exclaimed in bitter earnest as she looked at her jewels and her sumptuous robes : "*Il faut donc quitter tout !*" Yes, all ; all the triumphs, all the fascinations of the theatre ; the crowded audiences, the reverberating plaudits, the gorgeous garments, the homage paid by kings and poets, the jewels offered by emperors and cities, the glory of being to her own people the interpreter of their greatest poetry, and to the rest of mankind the truest embodiment of those classic fictions which have delighted the world for thirty centuries. All she had to leave. One can hardly realize that the form so instinct with expression, that towered in hate in "*Les Horaces*" and writhed in agony in "*Adrienne*," that was all alive with love and horror conflicting in "*Phédre*," and transformed with a radiance never seen on any other uninspired form, in "*Polyeucte*," that this

should be still and stiff for ever; that the eye which burned with the intensest and guiltiest ardors, or withered with scorn, or flashed with hate, should be finally closed; that the voice, which rang clear and loud, or was convulsed with emotion, that was the very music of declamation, or the absolute incarnation in sound of rage and horror, should be for ever stifled. To be sure, as Gertrude says, in "Hamlet:" "All that live must die." The change is common, but how much more startling when it falls upon one whom we have only seen in the intensest life, crowned with the most dazzling gifts ever vouchsafed to humanity, receiving in the most actual and present manner the applause of her contemporaries! Nothing strikes more forcibly than the contrast between Rachel, as I last saw her, in "Phèdre," stammering out her guilty passion to the Amazon's child, crying "j'aime" with a meaning that no one else could put into those two words, and looking "j'aime" with a meaning greater still, and Rachel, broken-hearted, dying, struggling to resist the irresistible enemy, recalling her triumphs, and demanding once more to see the jewels she had received and the royal attire she had worn—and then crying out in the bitterness of her soul: "Il faut donc quitter tout!"

The secret of the fascination of the theatre for minds of a certain class, minds imaginative and yet not wholly so, minds which like to see their imaginings embodied, and which sometimes fling an imaginary grace around the actual, which live in the real world but elevate it into the ideal, is, that great acting makes real for them their ideal; it presents to the perceptions of eye and ear what had before only lived in the cham-

bers of the brain. Of course, this is the mission of all art; this incarnation of the imagination is what elevates and refines in painting and statuary and architecture. Poetry is purely and simply imaginative; it calls up only to the soul's sense the creations of the poet's fancy; it is dreamy and abstract: but other and realer art makes alive, brings out of the womb of the mind; not only conceives, but brings forth, through much tribulation, a living thing—a thing of beauty; and as a man, who unborn is soulless, but once brought into the world is alive for an eternity, so this thing of beauty once embodied, is a joy for ever. It not only vivifies the conceptions of the artist, but realizes the ideas of the rest of the world; those unformed, floating notions of the beautiful we all have, are shown by it not to be mere fancies, to be capable of expression, of utterance, of form, of life.

Now, no art is so actual as that of the stage; the actor does not represent a man, he is one; he does not so much feign passion as he really feels. As the human voice is the sweetest and most expressive of instruments, as the human form is the noblest, and the human face the most beautiful and pliable of materials, so he who works with such material has an advantage over his brother artists who labor in colder clay and less living colors, or struggle with rougher and more intractable instruments. The sculptor leaves you to imagine life and color, the painter can only make you fancy form and substance, the musician represents words; all their arts are more intangible, more elusive, more ideal perhaps than that of the great artists of the stage; the actors may be no greater, but they are more perfect in

this one thing—in the complete expression and elimination of their idea. No statue ever equalled the grace and dignity of one of Rachel's attitudes, and she changed them every moment; no painting ever portrayed half the intensity of her looks, and they came in such rapid succession that the beholder was fatigued to follow. So the stage, of course only in its most exalted representatives, possesses advantages that no other art can claim. Who could possibly paint a *Phédre* like that we have seen? Who can carve a *Camille* like that we shall never see again?

For if the stage possesses this power of realizing the creatures of the imagination as no other art does, Rachel, of all actors, was the one who possessed the greatest share of this power. She not only realized a grace, a beauty, a dignity such as we had never before seen with our bodily eyes, but such as few of us had dreamed of in our most exalted rhapsodies. She presented to us loftier ideas than many had imagined from reading the poet's page; she soared even beyond the dramatist himself; what was Racine's *Phédre*, compared with hers? What was the *Camille* of "*Les Horaces*" by the side of the magnificent creation of the actress? I think I shall never tire of the theatre for this reason; I would rather have my fancies fully embodied, than floating half-shapen through my brain. I may not be so ethereal or so completely ideal in the character of my mind as those who are content with their own imaginings; but when I can contemplate incarnate even a degree of Hamlet's solemn melancholy, of Macbeth's fright, or the terrific grace of *Phédre*, it affects me more than the gloating over my own



notions alone. I leave altogethêr out of consideration the sympathetic influence possessed by some geniuses, and which, I confess, affects me more even than their art. But this Rachel did not possess; with her, it was the perfection of art you contemplated.

She had a complete appreciation of the character suggested by the poet; she entered absolutely into the sentiment of antiquity; she was imbued with the classic influence, and she possessed a wonderful intellect as well as all the mechanical or material gifts of a great actor; that is, a voice, a form and a face capable of any degree of expression, either in the lightest shade, or the greatest intensity. And she knew perfectly how and when to use her tools; but she did not possess the electric feeling which acts so strangely upon actor and audience. She struck you with awe or horror, but she felt none herself; she moved you, but it was in spite of yourself. Her exertions were wonderful, and their results prodigious; but she was not of those upon whom the inspiration descends; she rather worked herself up. I could often tell when she was about to make a point by the preparation of her limbs, like the crouch of a basilisk before its spring. When I saw the shivering, I knew she was about to move me; but I could not sit unmoved for all that knowledge. Her influence was akin to that of a sorceress; you saw the means by which she produced the charm, at least you knew them; you saw her prepare to cast the spell about you, and yet could not resist. You were as completely in her power, as if you had fallen in unawares. This of course is a proof of the greatness of her art, but it proves, too, that the inspiration of the moment did nothing for her. You

never wondered how Grisi moved you ; you never knew ; she never knew herself ; the moment came and with it the inspiration. The one was absorbed in the play, and felt all the wrath of Norma or remorse of La Favorita ; the other knew all the time that she was Rachel, the Jewess, and that you were only the puppet to be worked upon.

This everlasting coldness, this superhuman calm, this almost divine serenity, while all around were shuddering with awe, or wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement, provoked the auditor. One does not like to feel at the mere beck of another ; to be dissected and subjected to a galvanic battery ; you want to feel from sympathy ; because another is moved, you would be moved also. Then you care not how deep the emotion.

But your admiration and interest were compelled in your own despite by Rachel. From the first instant that she was upon the stage your attention was riveted and concentrated upon her ; it was impossible to look at anything else. She first attracted by the inimitable grace and dignity of her attitudes, and when the spell was potent, defied you to resist the fascination or remove your eyes. For with her, as with other great actors, the pantomime was even greater than the declamation. The charm consisted more in the wonderful meaning she was able to throw into every movement than in the sonorous tones of her voice, thrilling as its accents were. The glittering fire of her eye, the world of expression in her mouth, the electric motion of her limbs, all these were incomparable. The idea that it was necessary to understand French, in order to appreciate her, is absurd ; passion speaks a universal language, and needs no interpreter ; and if Rachel had uttered

not a word, her acting would still have been consummate art.

But art only : her attitudes, although inimitable, were so exact, that by no possibility could one of them have been unprepared. The awful minuteness in the delineation of the death scene in "Adrienne" was always the same ; from the nervous twitching at the bosom which first indicated the action of the poison, to the last attitude as she sat in her chair, her eyes set and every limb fixed with a rigidity that life never knew before. The same gesture always occurred at the identical moment, and always exactly in the same place ; when you had seen her once, you had seen her always. Then that wonderful voice of hers, always true, gave like an instrument, always the right note at her call ; her intonations, like her movements, were never changed. But as she had reached absolute perfection, she could not change the slightest gesture, look, or tone, for the better. Then why change ? You could not quarrel with her for not deviating from what was superlatively great ; only this proves that she was impassive, intellectual, cold ; not impulsive, and fitful and inspired.

Neither was she versatile ; her greatness was only transcendant within her own sphere. No human being ever surpassed her rendering of classic rôles. The fearful curses that Camille calls down on Rome, uttered with an earnestness that made the blood curdle in one's veins ; the shame and torture of the guilty Phédre overwhelmed with passion for her husband's son, and the ecstatic radiance that beamed from the face of Pauline when she cried : "*Je vois, je sais, je crois*"—all these were effects such as will never be equalled. But they

were not such as come home to the heart of mankind, they were ideal and distant; classic, beautiful, or terrible; but Rachel could not play a modern woman in love: she had no talent for comedy; her Lesbie was not worthy of comparison with her other rôles; her representation of Adrienne only became transcendent when she became tragic; her Tisbé was exquisite, and beautiful to look at, because she could not be ungraceful, and dressed with superb taste, but what was this compared with the scorn of Hermione? Others play Tisbé, but who will attempt Camille?

Two things seem to me to have distinguished Rachel from all the actors whom I have seen or read of. The first is the classic severity with which she embodied the ancient characters, the awful feeling of fate with which she could invest them, the reality which she gave to the fables of antiquity. *Mon plus beau rôle de Camille*, she rightly styled that in which she first played in America. The statues that have come down to us do not so realize one's notions of Grecian queens or Roman maidens; the ideas we had of Hermione and Virginia were not so true, or so exact, or so exalted as those she gave us. No one probably ever shared, in equal degree, this power to vivify antiquity, to recall the interest which was felt by the Greeks in the amphitheatre of Athens three thousand years ago, when they shuddered over the same crimes and wept over the same woes that have moved the entire cultivated world of to-day.

The other peculiarity is one of her art, or her temperament, rather than of her intellect or taste. It was the emotion she was able to express in limb and form. Others whom I have seen have crowded as much and as

varied meaning into their faces; eyes have glared as intensely, mouths have been as mobile and as passionate, nostrils have dilated as fiercely, cheeks have faded and reddened at will like hers; but no frame ever was so instinct with feeling; no step had such significance; no hands were so full of expression. Think of the writhing in that chair of Camille, of the utter relaxation of nerve and form into the agony and abandonment of grief; think of the unutterable scorn with which she dragged her robe from the clutch of Œnone, in "Phédre;" think of her attitude as she sang the "Marseillaise," and tell me who can equal these?

Who, indeed, that heard and saw Rachel when she sang the "Marseillaise" will soon forget it? She chanted the great song in a low monotone, the orchestra accompanying her, but so subdued as in no way to obtrude upon the ear. She had been playing Camille, and wore her tunic alone, the outer garments thrown off, the Roman head-dress laid aside, and came close up to the audience. A woman singing her national hymn in a strange land, an actress chanting to republicans the strains forbidden in her own home, but which she had sung in those stormy days of February—she infused a meaning into the famous "Marseillaise" that Rouget de Lisle never dreamed of. She looked the very genius of revolutions. The tri-colored flag was on the stage, and while chanting the last words, Rachel snatched it up, wrapped it round her, fell on her knees, and kissed the folds. Of course she acted every word of the song; of course she made one feel that he had never really heard the "Marseillaise" before. But even this must pass away. *Il faut donc quitter tout.*

## AN AMATEUR OPERA.

"Know you the musicians?"

"Wholly, sir."

"Who play they to?"

"To the hearers, sir."

*Troilus and Cressida.*

NEW YORK society is divided into so many sets, that not often does one subject agitate its different circles; especially during the last season of small parties and panic reels, has it been more divided than ever. The Charity fête before the holidays, and at the close of the winter the Bachelors' ball, united all the coteries, it is true; but with these exceptions, each set has revolved in its own sphere, as regularly as a solar system. The vagabonds, who, comet-like, shoot out of their legitimate circle, and intrude within the influence of stranger luminaries, or where a foreign sun is central, are few and exceptional; not to be taken as types. However, one theme has for a month past been common to all the drawing-rooms in town. At evening or morning visits, at wedding *matinées* and charity raffles, at Lanciers' parties, at caudle parties, and on the promenade, wherever society has congregated, people have talked about the amateur opera. At first a few faint whispers got around; then the names of the singers were known, and the talent of the composer was discussed. Some re-

membered that the opera had been sung a summer or two ago at a country house on Long Island ; others were sure it was entirely new. By-and-by, one or two fortunate individuals had copies of the libretto sent them, tastefully bound in green, with the compliments of the author : a pleasing, pretty libretto, too, with plot enough and character enough for a comic opera, with dramatic situations, with language sufficiently characteristic and amusing, with abundance of heroines and heroes, so that any number of fashionable amateurs might participate.

Soon the rehearsals began : the amateurs learned their parts, and sang snatches occasionally to a friend. Some critical acquaintances were even invited to attend a rehearsal, and gave such glowing accounts, that others were anxious to share the pleasure ; and before the opera was really given, half the connoisseurs in town had heard it. All who had the open sesame, agreed that the music was charming ; but the verdict was not a fair one, cried the outsiders. " Invite us if you would be certain of impartiality." However, it must be piquant, everybody said, to have your acquaintances perform in opera ; to see them in costume and character ; to watch them act and to criticise their voices ; to compare them with artists. Doubtless, too, the amateurs had their enjoyment. Think of the triumphs of the little stage ; of the delight in receiving the applause of such select audiences ; of being assured by historians, and critics and millionaires, that they only need make a public débüt to eclipse all the prima donnas and primo tenores of Irving Place or Les Italiens. So the interest increased.

All the world was anxious for tickets ; the performers were beset with notes begging for invitations ; the

composer and author and host combined received visits from strangers who would fain become his guests ; and at last, in order to gratify everybody, or (more important) offend nobody, it was determined to take a public room, and sing the opera on a regular stage. The public, however, was to be excluded ; the whole thing was scrupulously to be kept out of the newspapers ; none were to be admitted save those whose names were submitted to the inspection of the elegant *Amphitryon* ; so everybody was delighted at the prospect of going. But, alas, for the frailty of human expectations ! The dress rehearsals had taken place at the theatre ; the cards were engraved ; we were all promised our invitations ; and the ladies were determining whether to wear bonnets, or to go *en grande tenue*, when fell disappointment came. The young ladies who were to sing, got frightened at being before the footlights ; they rushed off the stage ; they never could face such an ordeal. Besides, the thing was too much talked of. As soon as all one's friends thought themselves secure of invitations, all one's friends began to make remarks ; and the result was, that no performance could be given except in a private house. The fifteen hundred invitations dwindled down to five hundred, and these must be issued for three different evenings. Those who had sixty cards to distribute were cut down to four, and some who were anticipating front seats at the opera, thought themselves lucky to get in at a dress rehearsal. Oh ! how some of us wished we hadn't talked so much. Those of us who went, however, didn't care. In fact, we relished it all the better for the exclusion of our acquaintances. And so last week the opera was given.



“Flora, or the Gipsy’s Frolic,” ’tis called. The plot is pretty. A group of villagers are singing good-naturedly and unnaturally, as they always do in operas ; a pretty, soprano peasant, with a satin petticoat, and a lowly but handsome tenor for a lover, is smitten with the attentions of a baritone count, in a fine, red coat and with a martial air. The peasant Annette jilts her young tenor, who, by the way, has as delicious and delicate a voice as Brignoli. She is charmingly coquettish, and sings sweetly and expressively ; while her father and mother, two worthy, quarrelsome, but loving folk, make manifest their dispositions, also in song, and in some capital acting of a comic sort. But the count is not to have it all his own way. A gipsy with a fine voice and *such* a pink skirt, predicts trouble to the baritone, to the tenor, and in fact to all the various singers ; she says a malicious word to each, enough to stir up some mischievous sentiment, makes the peasant anxious for the gentleman’s notice, sets the mother crazy for a brand new bonnet ; and then goes to her most important task, that of exciting jealousy in the bosom of the high-born Lady Flora, the intended bride of the red-coated count. Fine ladies, the gipsy finds as susceptible to naughty feelings as poorer folk ; the Lady Flora fires with jealousy, makes herself very miserable, and her audience very happy by singing a mournful contralto song, full of pride and love and sorrow and tears (*les larmes dans la voix*), and when the count next appears, resents his inconstancy. The peasant too makes her swain love-lorn, plagues him and sends him to sing his grief in a sweet, expressive strain, while Mr. and Mrs. Popinjay quarrel away in a really characteristic and clever duet.

The high-bred singers, chorus and all, for the choruses too are ladies and gentlemen, look a little awkward at first, when gazed at by their acquaintances, and cannot always refrain from a smile or a glance as they catch the eye of a friend. The peasants in their hoops and diamonds sing, however, very true, and at last get quite rustic in their manner. After a really fine performance of a solo or a duet, the performers receive a call, and come out to curtsy or bow in recognition of the delicate plaudits of the audience. It looks funny to see some belle of the winter acknowledging an encore, and slipping back behind the scenes; or a fashionable man bowing before the footlights. During the entr'acte the performers mingle with the audience, more anxious perhaps to receive their compliments and show their finery, than to keep up the stage illusion; but illusion there had been none. The pleasure was of another sort than that occasioned by ordinary theatrical representations. It consisted in discovering a friend in that fine lady metamorphosed into a peasant, or recognising tones you had heard in society; or detecting feelings that you fancied might have existed, but could previously have only suspected in the actors of the amateur opera.

But the curtain is raised again. The wicked gipsy having wrought all this mischief, repents of what she has done, and sets to work to undo it. She makes the Lady Flora sure that her lover is true, induces Annette to return to her fond swain, and in the general rejoicing old Popinjay is so delighted, that he promises his wife the bonnet which had been the theme of all their quarrels; so, of course, all ends merrily.

The opera lasts three hours, and contains many

pleasing strains; several bits of melody that can be remembered, and a drinking chorus that has been a favorite at more than one club-house in town for a year or two past. The music is quite dramatic, and at times really sweet and characteristic. It is very carefully sung, having been rehearsed daily for many weeks; indeed, had the amateurs been artists they could not have worked harder. Daily, from eleven to three, have some of the first ladies in New York been engaged in their duties; daily have gay men devoted themselves to the task. And they acquired a facility of execution, a familiarity with their parts, that made the performance as fine a one of this description as has ever been known in New York. The choruses, too, were excellently given, a number of fine amateurs consenting to lend their valuable assistance for the occasion, by kind permission of their parents.

It is well known that a really high degree of musical cultivation exists in New York; very many young ladies sing with a skill and taste that are quite admirable; several sweet, fresh, and even sympathetic voices are familiar to the frequenters of musical parties, while a fine taste in such matters is usual. Private concerts are not rare, but an exclusively amateur performance is less common, while an operatic one is unprecedented. Private theatricals have occasionally varied the monotony of balls and receptions; readings, too, sometimes occur; but an amateur opera has never before been given in New York. The singing of the opera was the same that has frequently been heard; but the acting was at once surprising and delightful. The naïveté, the modest simplicity, with a dash of coquetry of the peasant; the tear-

ful pride and jealous anxiety of the lady; the manliness of the count; the capital humor of the old innkeeper, and the petulance of his wife, displayed dramatic talent that was hardly looked for in the ladies and gentlemen who assumed these parts. The gipsy and the peasant lover, too, were well performed, and the choruses did not fail to do their part to make the production of "The Gipsy's Frolic" one of the most pleasing events that has of late occurred in New York society.

## HENRY WARD BEECHER.

"Get him to say his prayers."

*Twelfth Night.*

MONTAIGNE has a chapter about cannibals, in which he contends bravely in behalf of those much abused individuals ; he sets forth their numerous good qualities, and palliates their little peculiarities, proving quite to his own satisfaction that they are a very good sort of people, after all ; and he tells the story of Pyrrhus, when he met the Roman army and exclaimed : " I know not what kind of barbarians these may be, but the disposition of their army has nothing of the barbarian in it."

Nearly half of those who have heard of Mr. Beecher regard him as a monster worse than any cannibal ; they would be more surprised than Pyrrhus to discover so little of the barbarian in him. For it has happened to him, as to many others who become identified with a doctrine, or are considered the embodiment of an idea, that he is lost sight of in the doctrine ; according as people hate or like his teachings, they hate or like him ; he is praised or censured not at all with reference to his personal qualities, but as men's prejudices or convictions prompt. The radicals swear by him, while the conservatives cross themselves at the mention of his name ; but it is the abolitionist who is offensive, and the temperance

advocate who draws good houses. His absolute merits, his abstract traits are forgotten in the struggle that rages over the doctrines he has espoused. Yet the fact that he has become so completely identified with those doctrines proves his power; plenty of other people uphold them, yet are not instantly and for ever associated with them. But who can mention Henry Ward Beecher, and not think of his politics and his principles? He is they and they are he; they in him and he in them. The very identification that makes his individual traits less remarked springs from the marked character of those traits.

His success also renders him worthy of notice; his position is established; his mark is made; there is no denying the fact of his prominence. People may quarrel over his notions and abhor his dogmas; they may disapprove every one of his actions, and reject every one of his teachings, but they cannot ignore either him or them. There he stands; abrupt and offensive, it may be, but secure. To have obtained this prominence indicates ability; to have rendered himself so obnoxious to praise or blame, is the surest proof of character.

It strikes me that Mr. Beecher is especially a man of the times; a man fitted for the very position he holds in the public eye: not for the ministerial position; I do not think the pulpit his sphere; he seems to me a stump speaker who has mistaken his way and stumbled into a church; he would be more at home in a congress than in a synod; in the state assembly than in the general assembly; in the House of Representatives, with his feet on the desk, interrupting the speaker, or talking against time, than reading psalms and discussing texts.

That he himself feels this, is apparent from his constant dragging the topics of the day into his sermons. It is notorious that he preaches politics, temperance, abolition, what you will, or rather what he will, more than religion. Ultra opinions are declaimed in the most ultra style; the brawls of the hour are introduced into sacred places, and the mud and mire of politics besmear the robes that should be kept pure. The influence of religion itself is injured, its sacredness lessened, its effect curtailed by such a course. Immoderate and indecorous as Mr. Beecher frequently is, he forgets or neglects the precepts of his master to insist upon his own notions, or to overthrow his own opponents; the Christian minister recalls the warning of the heathen poet:

“Nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus  
Inciderit.”

But if not fitted for the pulpit, he is fitted for his place in the public eye. He was born to be a leader, a party leader; to control men's minds, and feelings and actions: he is regarded as a leader, as a master mind. His followers think of him ten times oftener, the public think of him ten times oftener as a man and a politician than as a Christian or a clergyman. He has all the qualities of a man of mark; immense energy; perseverance never tiring, never flinching; fearlessness that sees all chances, and takes them all, whatever they be. A condensation himself, an exemplification of many of the recognised traits of the American character; with the traits intensified that so many around him share; when these look on him, they behold themselves and approve. He is

eminently and emphatically of this age and this country, and herein lies the secret of much of his success. For he would never have calmly considered what the age demanded, and then shaped his course accordingly; he, above all men, could not conform to circumstances; he happened to be born in a time and country where just such qualities as he possesses could be turned to best account, but he would do and be just what he does and is, no matter where or when his lot might be cast. And say what we will, few of us calculate our chances and make our conduct correspond with the result. Even those to whom we give credit for acuteness and long-sightedness, only follow their natural bent, and then make their philosophy tally with their practice. Talleyrand was a philosopher and a diplomatist by nature, not from principle; he found his reasons for following the course he did, after his career was settled. If it had been his interest to act as Henry Ward Beecher does, do you suppose he would or could have acted so?

But Mr. Beecher is a man of genius as well as a man of the times. He wields that unaccountable and sympathetic influence which, wherever and whenever exerted, is instantly recognised and felt. This it is that makes one man more popular than his fellows of equal talent and character; this it is that secures its fortunate possessor regard, though much that he does be disapproved or disliked. This magnetic influence we have all experienced. The eye of some man we know, the tone of his voice, the charm of his manner, make it impossible to refuse him anything, however unreasonable, or exorbitant, or preposterous in him to demand. You may be angry with him, but he can soothe you in spite of your-



self; you may determine to affront him, but you find it impossible. This sympathetic power in private life has scarce a name; but when allied to other gifts is called genius. Combined with speech, it constitutes eloquence.

It is the exclusive gift of nature; the most consummate art is powerless to attain it; indeed, 'tis frequently distinct from and opposed to art; those possessed of it are often not only inartificial, but grossly natural. This native eloquence is Mr. Beecher's greatest charm; he subdues, or enthralls, or moves or astounds his hearers; he condenses an idea into a word; he flashes a brilliant simile across an obscure theme, and it is light for ever; he flings a profound thought out in clear and cogent language; he stirs you up to all sorts of queer intentions utterly contrary to those of your whole life; he extorts sympathy and emotion and tears from his bitterest opponents, but 'tis all by chance. He is a rough diamond; his brilliancy is all his own, and not the result of the lapidary's skill. He is careless of style; he constantly offends a nice taste by incongruities of illustration, and slovenly, unfinished figures; at times he speaks bad English, and uses both bad rhetoric and bad logic; he violates all the rules of the schoolmen, except when he conforms to those which pretend to do what rules can never accomplish, and then he conforms by inspiration. They conform to him, not he to them.

His fine command of language, forcible but never elegant; his flow of ideas, always interesting and sometimes strikingly and splendidly original; his lively fancy, so lively that its images are as often homely and belittling as elevated; his wit, or rather abundant humor, and that other trait never far off when humor is at hand—

his true pathos ; his genuine and genial sympathy with misfortune, and his downright hearty earnestness, are characteristics all of Henry Ward Beecher. Besides these, he possesses a susceptibility to the finest influences of art and nature ; he is alive to the beauties of natural scenery, and, if he could throw aside Puritan prejudices, would enjoy the opera as keenly as Dr. Bellows or George Sand. I can fancy him applauding the roulades of La Grange with infinite zest, or weeping over the woes of Camille with as just an appreciation of Miss Heron's genius as that of the most inveterate play-goer.

But where is the cannibal ? where is the barbarian ? Ah ! he eats human flesh ; he has his faults. He is rough and unrefined in diction ; his manner as a speaker is energetic but ungraceful ; his gestures are awkward though animated ; his voice harsh and under little control ; his inflections are frequently incorrect and his intonation displeasing. His taste is never subdued nor cultivated ; never catholic nor enlarged ; his ideas are not philosophical nor well-digested. He is a man of action. Action, action, action—makes up his notion of life as well as of oratory. The controlling, directing, restraining influence of judgment, without which energy and intellect are no better than locomotive engines off the track, seems to be lacking. With all his intuitions, with all his insight into general character, with all his knowledge of man, not of men, with all his jumping at conclusions, and often at right ones, with all his genius, he is constantly off the track.

His independence is that on which he prides himself most ; it has done him the most harm and the most good. A certain degree of this is indispensable to a man's suc-

cess ; but what if it is offensive, unchristian, unministerial? What if it amounts to a disregard of another's tastes and feelings and interests? if it makes him careless even of the effects of what he says and does, and so work against himself? if it makes him abrupt and affrontful, so that he injures any cause he defends quite as much as he aids it? He stands out prominently, indeed, but so does a scarecrow.

## EDWIN BOOTH.

"Sometimes let gorgeous Tragedy  
In sceptred pall come sweeping by."

*Il Penseroso.*

It has been of late very much the fashion to speak slightly of tragedy: people of taste and accomplishment decry the stilted walk of the buskin, and prefer the easy gait of the sock. Or, at any rate, tragedy must be modern and real: we must have every-day life and every-day people: Camilles and de Varvilles only, it is said, can interest us now-a-days. I confess I have been tinctured with this heresy. I, too, have fancied that the display of passion on the tragic stage was overdone; that the demonstrative performances of Kean and Garrick might have been well enough for Johnson and Addison, and that sort of people; that Mrs. Siddons was all very well, but rather too pompous or too grand; that the stage must represent only ordinary life and ordinary incidents. I have leaned towards realism. *Peccavi.*

There is, however, something to be said in favor of this view. When you have no great actor to dispel your theories, you may go on and prove how mouthing and ranting constitute acting; how the sentences of Shakspeare and the situations of Massinger are unnatural; how Lear is ridiculous and Richard extravagant.

You may fancy that Iago is too wicked and Overreach too miserly; you may say how charming is comedy—while you have no tragedian. And for a long while there has been no man on the English or American stage to contradict such notions. Forrest is full of feeling; but he certainly never elevates nor refines by his performances. His conceptions are not intellectual; the effects he produces are by physical means; his eye is the hyena's, not the eagle's; he moves, but inspires not; horror, rather than sublime terror, is the emotion he excites. Macready was a stately elocutionist, and all the rest have been second-rate. As for the women, Miss Cushman is not the one to disabuse you of these ideas; and Miss Heron is very likely to confirm them. With all her intensity of feeling, with all her power over your nerves, she yet, like Forrest, neither elevates nor refines. She finishes to the coarsest and minutest detail, she has an abundance of womanly instinct, and a great ability to express it, but it is impossible not to feel that there is another and a higher sphere of art than that which she essays.

Edwin Booth has made me know what tragedy is. He has displayed to my eyes an entirely new field; he has opened to me the door to another and exquisite delight; he has shown me the possibilities of tragedy. Though he has not yet done all that he has pointed at, there are moments in his acting in which he is full of the divine fire, in which the animation that clothes him as with a garment, the halo of genius that surrounds him, not only recalls what I have read of others, not only suggests, but incarnates and embodies my highest notions of tragedy. The two last acts of "Richard III.,"

in which he walks around, the moody, restless tyrant, or slumbers uneasily and wakens wildly; the tremendous energy of the battle-scene; the rush on and off the stage; the fight with Richmond on his knees; and the awful writhings afterwards, so different from the animal contortions of Mr. Forrest, are instances of tragedy in its highest and most legitimate domain. There is no cold, debasing realism here: there is the poetry of the stage, the realization of your ideas of the Richard of Shakspeare—a royal murderer, a kingly monster, a man at once magnificent in intellect and terrible in passions.

A peculiarity of his Hamlet proves at once his originality and the refined ideality of which I have spoken. His conception of the ghost scene differs widely from any I have seen or read of. Instead of representing Hamlet as overcome by animal fear, or even by a supernatural dread, as most, if not all, actors have done, Booth portrays him awed, of course, at the tremendous visitation, but still more imbued with a filial and yearning tenderness. The tones of his voice, especially when he falls on his knees to the ghost, and cries out, "Father!" the expression of his face, and, above all, of his eye, embody this new and exquisite conception, and seem to me more affecting even than the fright of Garrick could have been, which Fielding says made all the spectators also fear. Booth makes them share, instead, his tenderness.

Those who fancy that the age of tragedy is gone, maintain especially that Shakspeare is degraded and belittled by being acted. Of course when the text of the greatest of dramatists is uttered by inferior men, it is mangled. Of course tame or ignorant bunglers mur-

der Lear, and Henglers mouth in "Hamlet;" but the most susceptible natures, the keenest intellects, those most alive to the subtle meaning of the poet, or most affected by the passions of the play, must all the more acknowledge and appreciate really great acting. Of course some things cannot, from their very nature, be well played. Dainty images of Ariel and Puck are better never embodied; the exquisite utterings of Miranda may be quite as fitly considered in the closet; yet it is a delight to have even these suitably repeated, while the strife of emotions, the grander passions of a Macbeth, an Othello, or a Richard, get fuller utterance at the hands of an inspired genius, than they ever find embodiment in brain or heart of mankind generally.

Charles Lamb, I know, says that any words would do as well as Shakspeare's; if they had the plot and situations, that Banks or Lillo could write another "Hamlet," which would prove quite as effective on the stage as that which contains the line, "I'll call thee Hamlet, Father, Royal Dane;" as the play which is full of opportunities like those afforded by the entire scene with Ophelia, that with Gertrude, or the interview with the Ghost. He says the exquisite language of the poet goes for nothing; that the coarse outlines of the character are all the tragedian can grasp. Was this so when Garrick, in "Lear," gave the curse with such effectiveness that the whole pit rose involuntarily and in tears? Was this so when Edmund Kean recited the lines in "Othello," "Then, oh! farewell," in such a way that Hazlitt declared those who had not heard it could have no idea of perfect tragic acting? Did it make no difference what words were uttered then?

Then take good plays, Shakspeare's especially, which I constantly hear it said are unfit for the stage, are too fine for acting, take those which are acknowledged to be the greatest, and do they not receive from great acting a still greater development? The dramatic truth, the intensity of interest, the hurried action, the accumulation of incident, the marvellous development of character, and above all, the portraiture of passion, make them, beyond all plays that ever were written, fit for the stage. The energy of Richard III., in the last two acts, cannot by any possibility be so imaged by the mind as it is brought vividly before the eye in a theatre. The words get new life and significance when uttered with their suitable concomitants. How much more forcible to see the defeated king staggering around when he cries, "A horse! a horse! My kingdom for a horse!" than to read the lines calmly at home! How much more meaning can be infused into the few words—"What do they in the north?" than most people find in them alone. I confess I am not of those who get from the genius of the stage no keener appreciation of lines and words that I have studied often before. I have heard things said of whose intensity of import I had no previous conception. I read a play again before I go to see it performed, so as the better to judge or appreciate the rendition. I read it again afterwards to recall the delight the player has afforded me; to bring up the

"—— strange powers which lie  
Within the magic circle of the eye;"

to summon the echo of the tones that moved me so in the theatre.



There is one advantage that the stage has, which I do not remember to have seen noted, but by means of which it will, I think, be acknowledged to add a force and grace to the most exquisite or moving language. How many emotions are too subtle, too transient, too shaded for expression in words! How many degrees of passion are as incapable of such embodiment as the flash of the lightning on the canvas of the painter, or the roar of Niagara, even by the brush of Mr. Church! And yet every shade of feeling can be expressed on the human countenance. The look that comes over Rachel in "Polyeucte," when she says—" *Je vois, je sais, je crois,*" is as indescribable as the thunder, would have been a revelation to Corneille of his own meaning. And shall this be called a mimicry, a *furberia della scena*? I have heard the play of Ristori's countenance in "Myrrha" described as still more prodigious, though I cannot imagine it; and all critics have agreed that action and gesture can express many sentiments beyond the reach of words. Churchill says of Garrick:

"Whilst in each word I hear the very man,  
I can't catch words, and pity those who can."

Rachel's pantomime was always to me more expressive than her tones. Kean was frequently inaudible or incomprehensible in his broken sobs of passion; and I have watched young Booth through an entire act without knowing or thinking of a word he said. (It was not in Shakspeare, however.) This, some may say, will prove that Lamb was right; that the words are of no consequence; but the words first suggest the idea to which the player gives further utterance. Is it heresy to talk

of an actor giving fuller utterance to Shakspeare's ideas? If the human constitution is capable of passions too fleeting, too intricate, too tremendous to get entire embodiment in the language even of a Shakspeare, may not another genius incarnate those emotions in another form, which the poet has first completely suggested?

I find on the tragic stage rarely, yet there it is, the actual representation of the ideas of the poet; the union of lofty passion and historic character; of exquisite sentiment and sublime poetry; the begetting of an idea by one genius, the bringing it forth by another; the union of soul and body, of spirit and matter; the manifestation of the divinity of poetry in the flesh; what otherwise is intangible and unnatural, only perceptible to the eyes of the soul, actually vivified to the bodily sense. Such manifestations of course are like all manifestations of genius, apparent only in two or three men in an age; even in these obscured or imperfect; but when I can see them, I throw aside my books. My soul is reached through the medium of my senses. When I get into another world I shall perhaps be so ethereal as not to need palpable images or external means. As it is, I am content with what comes through eye and ear, if it at last reaches the brain and heart—the very man.

## THE BEAUX.

“Here comes Monsieur le Beau.”

*As You Like It.*

ONE of the court preachers at the time of the Fronde began his discourse by dividing it into thirteen heads, whereupon the congregation very naturally manifested signs of dissatisfaction; but, observed the wily priest, “at present I shall omit a dozen of them.” So I could readily find thirteen varieties of beaux to discuss with my fair readers, who, because of my theme, will doubtless favor me with an unusual share of attention, this fine Sunday morning; but at present I shall omit half-a-score of them.

The three species of beaux most common in New York, those most distinctly marked, and whose habits are most generally known, are the old beaux, the foreign ones, and the dancing men. Every belle will admit that for one of another description than these, she has met a dozen of the sorts I mention. Let her think who pay the most frequent visits, who are the most regular at the opera, who send the finest bouquets, who walk on Sunday mornings, who attend all sorts of entertainments in the daytime, and go wherever they are asked (which is everywhere) in the evening. It certainly is not the men of great intellect; these go to dinners, and occasionally

to receptions, or to some extraordinary fête, but that is all ; it is not the men of business ; these go nowhere, and nobody wants them, for they think and talk of stocks and of trade in all places and under all circumstances ; it is not the important men, who go into society only when they have an object, who give balls to politicians, or suppers to their wives as these pass through town on their way to the capital ; it is not the purely literary men ; for many of them have no access to society, and those who would be courted and fêted, find it comparatively dull ; not even vanity takes them often within its magic circle. So the clever, brilliant women have to play off their battery of wit and charms on effete Penednises, on foreigners who so often are unworthy, or on the *jeunesse dorée* of male fashion—youths with fine manners and fine clothes, with means and family, with everything in the world but brains.

Some of the women like the old beaux : these are mostly bachelors of a certain age, or widowers ; they are bald in spots, or else wear toupees of a glossy jet ; they are precise in dress, but not precisely fashionable. Their collars are very stiff, but they never dare wear them in the newest mode ; their cravats are adjusted with scrupulous exactness, but they look got up, and the old fellows are so afraid of disturbing the knots that they can't turn their heads to one side or the other. They are all ugly ; generally ghastly ; youth being gone, and one or two teeth besides, whose absence gold cannot supply, one or two wrinkles having come, and the dye sometimes wearing off before 'tis detected by the sufferer ; these devotees of the *beau sexe* are not so irresistible in person as the last crop of dandies. Besides, they have

the rheumatism, and can't dance the German for three hours after supper; the field of their triumphs is not the ball-room; they stand around the doors and look on, or they hand ices across the table, or pick out French mottoes with superlative elegance; sometimes, to prove how much agility is left, they skip through the Lanciers while everybody else walks; but when the redowas, those fascinating, fearful dances, that the young women persist in liking, when these are reached, your old beaux must yield the floor. They may have been turning the most courtly compliments, they may have been smiling the most winning smiles, they may have been making the most favorable impression or the most excruciating witicism, but some dolt with heels, and long-winded enough for the waltz, snatches the beauty away, just before the pith of the joke or the point of the story, and leaves our poor old friend disconsolate and alone.

How delightful, then, for him to watch the syren whirled giddily round in the arms of a youngster; how he looks carefully about to see if any one has detected his discomfiture; how he picks himself up, and turns to some matron near by, whose diamonds never attracted him while the bright eyes were blazing so much more brightly right down into his soul; how he talks very bitterly about the impropriety of the waltz, and inwardly determines to practise it the very next morning, to learn that fearful leap of the redowa, that has been introduced since his days of dancing ended.

Ah! no, the ball-room is not the scene of his triumphs; nor the dinner; though, of course, Monsieur le Beau is *au fait* in all matters of the table; but the visit, the reception, the opera, the ordinary soirée, where he can

talk his small-talk, can get off his studied impromptus, can repeat to every lady in the room the same compliment, and perhaps recite his original poem on the death of a canary bird. For he thinks himself intellectual; he criticises new books as well as new singers; he gathers ideas from the newspapers, and retails them in society; he does even write verses quite often—sometimes tolerable ones, more often intolerable; he does not deny being the author of some stinging satires handed around occasionally; and until “Nothing to Wear,” or “Gems from Japonicadom,” or “Aquarelles,” or the “Potiphar Papers,” were formally acknowledged, he could never be brought to say that he was not guilty of the impeachment. The dear old fellows are satirical, and critical, and hypocritical, you must know. They are not so old as Polonius, and have not “grey beards and wrinkled faces,” and the other appurtenances that Hamlet tells of; but, like Polonius, they declare “mobled queen is good;” and like him, they think “beautified is a vile phrase.” Like him, too, they sometimes enact Julius Cæsar at the capitol; they have a talent for charades and tableaux: no such thing is complete unless they are concerned, nor no *déjeuner à la fourchette* unless they sit down; no wedding unless they are there to look at the cadeaux, no caudle scarcely, unless they hold the baby.

But you should hear them recite poetry; they do it with so much feeling and sentiment; they gesticulate so gracefully; lay their hands on their hearts with such an air; look at the prettiest girl in the room with such a glance, and at the close turn their eyes meekly up to heaven, or down to—the carpet, so as not to be embar-

rassed by applause. And they receive compliments so modestly! Men of such genius cannot be unconscious of their gifts; there is no good in disclaiming what is patent to all the world. But 'twas Heaven made them different from other people; no thanks to themselves. They have only cultivated what the gods first bestowed; they sometimes think if they were compelled to work they might do and be something in the world; and did you ever hear their lines on Miss Julia's pimple? or do you know what a good thing they said about Mrs. Tweedle's mole?

The readiness with which they catch at a really clever remark made by somebody else is an instance of their remarkable genins. I was in a box at the opera on the night of Piccolomini's débüt, while a woman of sense and taste was criticising the new singer's manner; "She has so much *abandon*." The beau without a word of acknowledgement, without even an "Oh, yes!" or a "Very true!" coolly exclaimed: "And then there is such an *abandon* about her," and I have no doubt he went all around the house talking of Piccolomini's *abandon*. Yet the women rather like these old drones; the foolish women, and you know there are some such in society, look at them with amazement; regard their accomplishments as fabulous; never express an opinion until they have learned what Monsieur le Beau thinks of the dancer, or the picture, or the poem: while the clever women tolerate them as some relief after the ordinary vapidty with which they are surrounded. They are the fashion, too, and must be asked for that reason, if for no other; for whoever gets the reputation of supreme fashion, need give himself no further trouble;

he is fêted and caressed and courted till—his day is over.

The dancing men are, however, more fashionable still than their venerable *confrères*. These are they with colorless hair and meaningless eyes, who get curled every day in the week but one, and then have no time, or something occurs, and they are seen with dishevelled locks, sadly in need of a friseur; these are they with little feet and delicate hands; with the most aristocratic bearing; who wear English clothes in the street—a sort of coarse stuff that costs more than broadcloth; who belong to the most exclusive circles; who are educated; who never speak incorrectly; whose manners are irreproachable; who are in years from twenty-one to twenty-nine; who don white cravats on grand occasions, like the Bachelors' ball or their cousin's wedding; who are not often seen in the theatre, and, in fact, not very much known out of their own set. Very many are young men of fortune, some have been abroad, and all speak two or three languages. It is not at all necessary, however, that they should be rich. There are just as many people of high fashion whose means are not independent as there are of real wealth. 'Tis only the Potiphars who worship the golden calf so exclusively; in fact, I think some of those most sought after in the best circles are absolutely poor. But to return to our sheep. These lambs are not Brown's men (and I confess I think Brown's men altogether mythological; you hear of them, but who ever met one?) they were properly introduced by their own families; everybody knows who they are, and what they are; and they are nice enough, only so vapid. They do dance divinely; they invent



new figures in the German, and never get tired in the redowa; they are *au fait* in etiquette, quiet in demeanor; but did you ever know them make an original remark. Haven't you wondered what they were saying in such low tones during the pauses of the Lanciers, or while they sat still in the German? They seem to flirt; but I don't think they really do. The girls like them to dance with, to walk with and to bow to, because these supremely fashionable young men confer distinction by their attentions. The mothers know this, and like to have a dozen dangling; but oh! what a penalty they pay! A woman of great talent, and one of the leaders of society, said to me the day after she had given a party, excessively aristocratic and excessively stupid: "My dear Mr. Vagabond, you and two others were the only men with brains who were at my house last night." I wonder to how many more she made the same remark.

Then the foreign beaux! The day for these is gone by; they are not so much admired as a few years ago. Too many adventurers have been intruded into respectable houses; too many forged letters of introduction have been presented; too many coarse men have been taken out by well-known families, and afterwards disavowed. Still, even when these men are adventurers, they are people who have paid attention to their manners; they are people with a natural aptitude for society, and with some accomplishments, generally with a knowledge or taste in musical matters; they can dance, and either sing or play; they are often handsome, have fine black eyes and heavy moustaches, and it is such a good chance for the young ladies to practise their French. So

the success that undeserving foreigners have often met with is not surprising; while those who are really what they pretend to be, though they do not now always receive so gracious a welcome as would have once been accorded them, have still no reason to complain of coldness or inhospitality. There are still houses where you will meet more foreigners at a reception than Americans; where more French is talked than English; where men may be found who bear titles, but do not claim them; people with historic names and no pretence. These are as charming as the old men of real culture, or the young ones who can talk as well as they dance, and whose ideas are as brilliant as their behavior. *O! si sic omnes!*

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## GEORGE BANCROFT.

"This strange, eventful history."

— *As You Like It.*

THERE are two methods of writing history ; one, that of the annalist who registers every event with scrupulous fidelity, omitting no circumstance that can possibly throw light on the characters or actions of his subjects ; who adorns his theme with picturesque and learned descriptions, and paints in glowing colors the manners of the times, as well as the individual traits of his personages ; who decorates his page, perchance, with all the graces of style, and makes himself famous for his eloquent and animated composition, his simple and picturesque, or, it may be, his rich and ornate language ; but who confines himself to description and narration ; who neither seeks to account for wondrous deeds, nor pry into the secret springs of character, nor to deduce lessons from the remarkable events he chronicles. The other method is that of the man who either writes with an aim, to magnify a character, to defend a revolution, to uphold a party, or to damn with everlasting infamy some opponent ; or who at least has settled convictions, and finds it impossible or undesirable not to indicate them in his writings. He considers history to be philosophy teaching by example, and believes it to be the

province of the historian to expound her lessons. He affects no blindness to faults or merits, and though he strives to be and believes himself, and often is impartial, he scruples not to administer praise and blame. He does not hold the scales and leave it to others to declare the result; he does not sum up the good or bad in a character, and neglect to announce the conclusion. He pronounces judgment on the various individuals who pass in review before him; he does more; he traces the results of events; he portrays the consequences of certain actions, and points them out as a warning or a beacon to mankind. He deduces opinions from his studies, and upholds them by arguments drawn from those studies. He also searches out the causes of the momentous occurrences whose history he narrates; he seeks in the great principles of nature, in the fundamental characteristics of man and of his Maker, the reasons for many circumstances that appear unaccountable. One relates faithfully, but refrains from biassing the opinion of his readers except so far as facts may have an influence; the other openly places facts in such a position that they shall maintain his views. One sifts, and balances, and tries and measures; the other is often an advocate rather than a judge, and always an executioner. This one is content with the painter's skill and the artist's fame; that one seeks also to convince and persuade, and would fain be recognised as a teacher and a philosopher as well as an annalist; the former spreads out a recital of facts, the latter dives into the recesses of opinion. One is always clear, uncontroversial, and allows every reader to determine for himself; the other is too often heated and unfair, sums up for one side, and alas! some-

times distorts and conceals the truth, to make it seem to warrant his conclusions. Yet the former, when most excellent in his sphere, must always be content with a lower rank than that assigned to the profound and eloquent philosopher who not only sets before mankind the course of events, but is also able to expound their causes and point out their effects.

America has furnished a brilliant example of success in each of these departments. One, the elegant and learned scholar who has given the world such fascinating narratives of life in the middle ages, and such lively, picturesque descriptions of those romantic times in American history when the conquest of a barbaric empire was twice accomplished by a handful of European chivalry. Another, the profound thinker and eloquent writer, who first has related worthily to his countrymen the progressive rise of the modern republic; who, with penetrating vision, has detected in slight circumstances the source of a mighty torrent of events; who has grouped into symmetrical and harmonious positions the growing colonies, and shown the consentaneous development of principles and sentiments, of national character and embryo power, resulting, at last, in the edifice of empire whose domain stops not with the shore, nor is bounded by the elements, but reaches across the continents and beyond the seas.

Mr. Bancroft's work is the great American classic; its theme the finest that could at this moment engage the student or the philosopher. The states of antiquity and the provinces of modern dominion have all furnished worthy subjects to the contemplation of the learned; but no nobler study can be imagined than the problem

afforded by America. 'Tis trite because so often handled by the incompetent ; but when elevated to its proper dignity, and treated by one who has fitted himself for his task by long and arduous research, by profound contemplation, and by extensive intercourse with affairs ; when viewed from the lofty stand-point assumed by Mr. Bancroft, and then so nobly discussed, with such ardor and mingled impartiality, the proportions of the theme are developed in their true grandeur, and convince one that they equal any ever attempted by historian.

The great research of Mr. Bancroft is perhaps first evident to one who carefully reads his volume ; the delving into old records ; records not carefully treasured up as the archives of a state or the heir-looms of an administration, but thrown aside into lumber-rooms, existing in tattered correspondence, or only in obscure traditions ; scattered over a country reaching thousands of miles, or hidden in the closet of any one of twenty cabinets abroad, whose predecessors, some centuries ago, assisted to colonize America ; *disjecta membra* confided to families now, perhaps, extinct ; all this curiously noted and studied ; a piece of information gathered here ; a hint from this speech ; a word from that document ; a clue found yonder ; a ray of light detected there ; volumes ransacked for a single name ; journeys travelled to verify a date ; correspondences carried on to ascertain one circumstance—these must be evident to the most casual observer. And then the skill with which the kernel has been extracted from the chaff ; the penetrating mind which, out of a mass of material so incongruous, has instantly discovered what tended to elucidate its purpose ; the peculiar ability for gathering from so many

unlikely and distinct quarters what would converge upon a single point, is also most remarkable. Continuous application is a trait of the mere annalist; but the ability to extract the gist of a matter, to perceive the use to be made of a fact, to discover the growth of an opinion, the origin of a party, the expansion of a sentiment by the light of some apparently indifferent or insignificant circumstance, this is a characteristic that belongs to the historian alone.

The ardor which Mr. Bancroft brings to his work is one of his most prominent commendations. He appreciates its importance to his country and to the race; he also perceives its grandeur, and his is a mind susceptible to impressions of sublimity and beauty in no ordinary degree. He takes in the entire scope of his subject, its infinite relations to the past and the future; he foresees how it may affect the ultimate destiny of man. He is himself full of lofty thought: while so practical as to neglect no detail, he is yet imbued with a belief in the progress of the race, and a noble sympathy with every true reform; he shares the hopes and aspirations that were and are the redeeming trait of the splendid French idealists, and fancies that the noblest of those aspirations may be realized in America. Profoundly impressed with these ideas, he devotes to his task at once a far-seeing vision and a fervor which fit him to do ample justice to so grand a theme.

He may at times trace fanciful connexions and deduce his conclusions from very distant premises; he does occasionally evince a tendency to the visionary character that is the result of too great a fondness for the ideal; but this is at times to be expected; and he manifests but few instances of biassed judgment. His opinions are, like

those of all mankind, sometimes influenced by his wishes or his fancies; but few of his temperament are so calm and equable as he; few who ardently engage in a cause can yet be so impartial, be so just to its opponents. He has but little bitterness, except for the foes of right; he indeed, sometimes, makes scarcely that allowance for the frailties of human nature that we expect from a philosopher; but his indignation is so generous that one is apt to be caught up in it before he is aware.

With all these characteristics of mind Mr. Bancroft combines the splendid talents that give his history its peculiar fascination. He is eloquent and rhetorical in the last degree; he sees the poetical side of his subject, and at intervals presents it in glowing language to the apprehension of his readers; yet his imagery is not offensively nor too frequently introduced; his embellishments are reserved for telling occasions; but when these arrive, after, by lucid expositions and dispassionate narrative, by cogent reasoning and an indisputable array of facts, he has brought your mind into a proper state, he launches out into strains of bold and animated declamation that to most readers are irresistible.

The grand and epic unity of his subject, evolved only by him, from the fragmentary history of a dozen scattered colonies, its gradual development, the care with which he has traced a kindred in feeling if not always in race, the pæans he chants after a triumph of justice, the tribute he pays to talent and virtue wherever found, his earnest love for truth, his profound impression of the right of man to freedom, his noble aspirations, his generous sympathy with the oppressed, his manly indignation at wrong; his fervid patriotism and kindling in-



terest whenever his country is particularly concerned ; his largeness of soul, that takes in all mankind ; his eye for the picturesque, evinced in exquisite descriptions of natural scenery ; his delicate perceptions of musical beauty, bespoken by the measured elegance of his style, and the lofty eloquence with which he rises at times almost into the sphere of the poet, all indicate that George Bancroft has not mistaken his vocation—all fit him most admirably for the task of relating to his countrymen and the world now living, as well as to posterity, the history of the republic whose existence, whose growth, whose magnitude, and whose future are alike the admiration and the mystery of modern times.

## THE PRIMA DONNAS.

"Here come more voices."

*Coriolanus.*

THE town is infested with prima donnās ; there is one at the Academy with a train behind as long as the procession of Banquo's children, including those that were imaged in the glass : there are two on the unaccustomed boards of Burton's theatre, and the parquet that last applauded the fun of Matthews or the wit of Brougham, now is filled with admiring cognoscenti who listen eagerly to Gazzaniga's declamation or Colson's French performances. There has even been an opera at Wallack's; oratorio singers essaying to enter the domain of profaner art ; and I read in the newspapers of English opera shortly to be given here, the American singer, Lucy Escott, coming home to enchant her countrymen. This is not all : Mrs. de Wilhorst is expected to arrive by the next steamer, to make a new *débat*, and Parodi is about to bid us another last farewell. Germans, Italians, French and Americans—the hardest to please, should find something agreeable in this *embarras de choix*.

How different from the days when Bertucca reigned supreme at the Astor Place ! Her right there was none to dispute ; no rivals with just the attractions which she did not possess ; whose novelty would compensate with the inconstant crowd for the lack of every other quality.

Bertucca was the first opera singer I ever heard ; my memory goes no further back than the Astor Place era ; I have read, indeed, in history, of Palmo's opera house, and of the Greek chorus in the time of *Æschylus* ; I know that there were singers in this country whose names may be seen still in the old files of the *New York Mirror* : I have heard that *Malibran* sang at the Bowery theatre a quarter of a century ago. Think of that, ye leaders of the ton ! the Bowery theatre, now given over to melodrama of the bloodiest and noisiest sort ; where actors sink who cannot be tolerated on Broadway ; the favorite resort of those who eat peanuts and applaud red fire ; the Bowery theatre was once crowded with fine folk, and its walls have echoed to the dulcet strains of *Rossini's "Barber."* Yes, *Malibran* sang there ; perhaps as great a prima donna as has sung in New York since. I know it to my cost. The first night that I heard *Jenny Lind*, I was with an old aunt, who, unfortunately, had listened to *Malibran* in that dim and distant past when the Bowery theatre was fashionable. I remember distinctly, that when the singer, who, to my unpractised ear, was absolute perfection, and whose notes I had been drinking in with entranced attention, closed her first song, and I was gasping for breath, Aunt Sally turned round to me and said : " Ah ! she isn't equal to *Malibran*." What was *Hecuba* to me ? What did I care for *Malibran* ? 'Twas the cruellest speech I ever heard ; it dashed down all my extacies ; it spoiled my evening ; and I never heard *Jenny Lind* afterwards without thinking of *Malibran*. I take good care, in my turn, to interrupt none of *Gassier's* unfledged admirers by talking of *Bosio*.

But *revenons à notre*—Bertucca. I shall never forget her singing in “Lucia,” on that first night that I sat in an opera house. I knew that Mr. Willis didn’t admire her, and had called her, in the Home Journal, a painted French doll, but I thought her a young and pretty girl. She wasn’t buxom then, and hadn’t become Madame Maretzek; I thought her voice full, and true and flexible, that night; but I heard Truffi the next in “Ernani,” and though I couldn’t understand a word of the plot, and I am not quite sure that I understand all of the plot now, I perceived Truffi’s superiority. And what plots, to be sure, Verdi does select! Who can unravel the “Rigoletto,” and who can tell what the “Il Balen” is about? Why *does* the prima donna come on in man’s attire, and why does Amodio get so excited, and what is Brignoli brandishing his sword so violently for?

I have heard “Ernani” often since, but the confusion remains. Those were times of confusion; those were the days of the lesser Astor-Place riots, when Truffi and Laborde had each her admirers; when swords were drawn in earnest behind the scenes and in the lobbies; when Mr. Lupus got up in his box and called out to the people on the stage. Horace Walpole did the same thing in London a century ago, and tells, with infinite glee, in one of his letters, that his friend dubbed him Wat Tyler on the spot. Those were the days when the famous Fry and Bennett quarrel originated, which has not terminated yet. Those were the days when the women went to the opera in the grandest of toilettes; when white gloves and a dress-coat were *de rigueur* for the men; when the general public cared nothing for music of the Italian sort, and when that music was not

one tenth part as good as what you can hear at two theatres in town next week. Those days are over. You may now go to the opera dressed for the street, and not be remarkable; you may go and not see an acquaintance (if 'tis in the summer); you may go and remember the glories of Truffi, and Bertucca and Parodi; but will you regret them?

Parodi made her *début* at the Astor Place. She came out in the midst of the Jenny Lind excitement; but she had a furore of her own. I believe she has one still, occasionally, at New Orleans and Cincinnati; but she can never make another here: she was tried and found wanting, a winter or two ago. After Parodi, Bosio and Steffanone sang at Castle Garden; and will opera-goers ever forget those summer nights, with moonlight streaming on the bay, Staten Island almost discernible in the distance, the shipping moored around, and such exquisite singers as have scarcely been equalled since, warbling away in the music of Bellini and Donizetti? Verdi was not the fashion then. "Lucia" and "Sonnambula" were the pet operas: Bosio was the favorite singer, and deserved to be so; New York first recognised the exquisite quality of a voice which has to-day no equal in Europe for purity, sweetness and executive power. There was the sensuous Steffanone, too, one of the true lyric queens, an actress of such consummate dramatic skill that only Grisi was more superb; effective at once in music and action. Steffanone was duly appreciated, though she seems forgotten now. But, amid all the successes of the "Trovatore," I have never forgotten that Steffanone first sang it in New York, and never has it been sung so well. Neither La Grange, with her

French method, nor Mrs. de Wilhorst, nor Parodi, nor Gazzaniga, with her intensity, nor any other, has so combined the delights of music and tragedy, in the rôle of Leonora, as Steffanone.

But there have been others of more world-wide renown. Jenny Lind indeed, was only a concert singer; she made a fiasco abroad in "Norma," and cannot be numbered among the great prima donnas; but Alboni, the incomparable, with her classical face and her delicious voice—undoubtedly the most delicious in the world; with her lazy manner and those wonderful contralto notes of hers; do you remember how they were introduced in the Brindisi of "Lucrezia?" And Sontag, so charming, so delicate, so interesting, so admirable an actress; surely no one has ever had her success since in the "Sonnambula;" none but she ever dared go across the stage on her knees. Poor Sontag! Her sad fate will always make her kindly remembered. The pet of European courts, the queen, at intervals of a quarter of a century, of the operatic stage, she ended her brilliant but chequered career on a foreign and deserted shore, away from friends, and home and fortune; and the very form that had been clad so superbly, and had once moved so gracefully, and wakened such admiration, was denied the commonest rites of sepulture.

But I cannot delay; the time would fail me to speak of Thillon with her curls and her eyes, and her airs and her graces; of Frezzolini; of Catherine Hayes and her Irish ballads; of La Grange, who was the friend of so many that I would not dare to speak an unkind word about her if I thought it, which I don't; of Grisi, who though she came to us after her perihelion was passed,

yet had voice and charms and genius enough left to show us what all the world had been worshipping so long. And now we have Gassier, who sings but cannot act, and Gazzaniga, who acts and sings with superb effect, and indeed I would rather hear her than any one now in America.

It is sad, is it not, to recall these memories of pleasures that are past; to think of all the different women so gifted, so beautiful, so graceful, who have sung on the New York stage; to think of the various theatres where we have heard them; the Astor Place, the Irving Place, Niblo's Garden and Castle Garden, the Broadway theatre and Burton's theatre; the halls that are burned down, the others where paupers and hospital patients now congregate, the others that are changed into tailors' shops and reading-rooms. And the gay and brilliant audiences; the gentle belles, the blooming matrons, the distinguished men who listened and looked! It is not well to think too much of pleasures that are gone; we shall always be comparing Malibran with Jenny Lind. And if I, a young Vagabond, have such a store of memories, what crowds of recollections must bewilder the old folk who have visited every opera-house in Europe; who heard such a singer in Madrid, and such a work in Berlin; who were at the débüt of Bosio in St. Petersburg, and assisted at the first night of "Le Prophète" in Paris. 'Tis best, I say, not to remember; I will stop my ears to Bosio when I listen to Gassier's roulades; and I must shut my eyes to Grisi when I look on Gazzaniga; and on one of those September mornings, forty years hence, which I hope you and I may live to see, perhaps we'll get out our memories, and talk about the prima donnas

who sang and who triumphed in New York so many decades ago. Meanwhile, we shall go every night next week; there is music to be heard. Don't stop for the recollections of Malibran that belong to others, or of Grisi that are your own.



## ROSSINI.

'Rarest sounds,  
Do ye not hear?"

PERICLES.

ROSSINI is not the favorite composer of New York ; and, indeed, I doubt whether his star has not paled its fires abroad : they tell stories in Paris about his jealousy of Meyerbeer ; how he pretends to gape while he listens to "The Huguenots," and falls asleep during the singing of the "Ah, mon Fils." But the old man need not fear : the new comers have their glories, it is true ; Meyerbeer reigns in Paris, and Verdi is triumphant all over Europe and America ; even Italy seems for a while to have forgotten the times when Rossini was young and beautiful, as well as a genius ; when the *dio della musica* was the adored of the ladies ; when the masses he composed were applauded in the churches, and the priests were obliged to sing the litany to airs in his operas. The hey-day of his fame is past, his beauty is faded, and his youth for ever gone ; but the perennial charms of "Il Barbiere" cannot grow old, and the overture to "Guillaume Tell" must last while men have ears to hear and souls to appreciate what is divine in music. Joachim Rossini is secure of immortality.

Even now, at the very acme of the popularity which

his successors have attained, while the "Trovatore" is known by heart to those who walk the streets without ever going to the opera; while the works of Meyerbeer crowd the Academy of Music for half a season; even now the managers of two different theatres in New York find it worth their while to bring out three separate productions of Rossini. In a city where no opera had ever been sung when the master was supreme, after the lapse of nearly half a century, a work is performed that was hissed in Italy on its first performance. The man who should think of hissing the "Barber of Seville" now, would be thought mad; but the most delicious opera that ever was written was scarcely endured to its close by Rossini's own countrymen. Malibran first sang it in America, and every singer since has essayed the brilliant, sparkling music: Grisi, Alboni, Sontag, Bosio, La Grange, Gassier, all like to roll the liquid sounds of "Una Voce, Poco Fa;" all are glad to join in the rapid "Zitti-zitti;" all are anxious to repeat the delicate strains of the "Buona Sera." And, sure proof that the musical education of our public is improving, we all hasten to hear the "Barber" and the "Tell."

"Guillaume Tell," three years ago, inaugurated at the Academy of Music those splendid revivals for which the establishment has since become famous, and I recollect well the crowd that thronged around its doors on the first night of the opera; no more brilliant assemblage has ever been seen within its walls since, often as they have encircled the fashion and distinction and beauty of the land. And the crowd was not for one night only; twelve performances were given in succession before New York was satisfied with the opera that some

people call heavy, and that others declare is not appreciated here. Last week, too, when "Guillaume Tell" was again in the bills, the audience was larger than it had been before during the season; and the "Stabat Mater" drew at Burton's on Sunday as crowded an assemblage as either Gazzaniga or Colson in her favorite rôle. Novelty piques the public taste, and intense passion excites it, and Rossini is neither new nor dramatic; but because we like Verdi, shall we forget his predecessor? Because the "Ernani Involami" is exciting, is "Di Tanti Palpiti" no longer exquisite?

The "Barber," the "Stabat Mater," the "Guillaume Tell," the "Italiana in Algieri," "Cenerentola," "La Gazza Ladra," "Semiramide," "Otello," "Moise," what a catalogue of splendors! what a fecund and versatile genius that could throw off such varied and exquisite productions! Delicious and delicate melody, exuberant and superb ornamentation, elaborate science, grand orchestral and choral effects, soft and flowing strains of such a subtle charm, that, once heard, they are remembered for ever; combinations for the voice such as few masters have been able to rival, and an intoxicating sweetness that is all his own; these traits the most inveterate unbeliever cannot deny to Rossini. True, he deals not so largely in the dramatic element; he has not the wild intensity of Verdi, nor the splendid passion of Donizetti; nothing like the poisoning duet of "Lucrezia" or the wail of the "Miserere" can be found in any of his works, except the "Stabat Mater." The occasional tragic force of "Otello" is transcended by the genius of his successors, and the fire of Arnoldi in "Guillaume Tell" is not equal to the spirit of Manrico,

and is besides exceptional. Rossini does not seem to be one of the emotional, impulsive natures, who feel so deeply themselves and are half mad with excitement until their agony of feeling gets utterance. He is not full of the turbulent unrest that characterizes much of the art and literature of this age; he does not possess the dramatic faculty, as necessary to the composer as the actor; the writer as the singer; he cannot, or does not, throw himself so completely into the individual whose feelings he portrays; in his works it is Rossini always whose influence you perceive: it is a delightful, charming influence, but not the emotions of *Semiramide* and of *Tell*; he is descriptive rather than dramatic.

The "*Stabat Mater*," however, forms a grand exception to the truth of this remark; here, and here only, in any of the works of Rossini, with which I am familiar, does he seem full of passion instead of sentiment; profoundly imbued with feeling; at all dramatic. Whether his religious feelings are deeper than any other, or whether his mind or temperament was particularly excited when he wrote the oratorio, certain it is that there is a splendid earnestness, a magnificent pathos and sympathy expressed in its music that do not distinguish his other works: nothing could be more full of sublimity and humanity than the "*Pro Peccatis*," nothing more touching than the "*Quis est Homo?*" nothing could give truer utterance to the emotions indicated in the language of the grand old Latin hymn, more religious at once and entirely human, fuller of grief, and love, and adoration, and repentance and aspiration, than the "*Inflammat*."

But no other music of Rossini has this *élan*; no other lifts you out of yourself; no other embodies those undefined yearnings, those lofty aspirations that everybody has, but nobody utters; no other expresses such profound thought as Meyerbeer, such stirring passion as Donizetti and Verdi. Rossini rather affects the graceful, the charming, the bewitching. He reminds you of the fairies by his lightness, his brilliancy, his sweetness, his subtle fancy, his delicate imagination, his indescribable charm; his intoxicating entrainment. You think of Titania, or of Undine; of mythology in all its weird and graceful forms; of moonlight, of Venice; of romance and love, but not love of the intenser sort; intrigues in Seville, serenades, harems in Algiers; Cinderella and her godmother, naughty magpies, nursery tales; or gorgeous, barbaric Semiramis, with her pomp of music and her elaborate overlay of feeling with florid sound. A souvenir of Rossini is a pageant of music, of rolling, flowing sounds; music for flexible and clear, pure sopranos; no need for your passionate, sympathetic voices, a La Grange makes a better Rosina than a Grisi; music for frolic and fun-loving baritones, for Figaros and Bartolos; sometimes a splendid Tell joins in the procession, but he is scarcely tender even when he embraces Albert, and is infinitely finer stirring up Arnoldi to patriotism, than petting his darling boy.

But when Rossini is in his glory, in those wonderful strains of the "Barber," in the music that some people forget to listen to, of the finale of the first act, because of the fun and bustle of the stage; in the prodigious ornamentation of the "Semiramide," involving and overlaying melody with strings of pearls of sound; in

the unsurpassed and unsurpassable sweetness of the "Non Piu Mesta;" in the Swiss music of "Tell," and the ballet of the same opera; the "Di Piacer" of "La Gazza Ladra," and in the "Di Tanti Palpiti," there is more of pure music than any other composer ever lavished on the world. The others are so dramatic that at times you do not notice how bare of real music they often are. Many of their scenes are splendid instances of declamation, but not really musical. Now, Rossini abounds in music, "pure and simple." He throws away little bits of melody; he scatters all over his works snatches of song sufficient to make the fame of an ordinary composer. The prodigality with which they are thrown around reminds one of Eastern princes scattering gold and perfumes; and, indeed, the music is precious as gold, and subtle as perfume. The prince of music, too, was as lavish as any of the monarchs in the "Arabian Nights." He wrote the "Barber" in thirteen days, the "Cenerentola" in eighteen; his first opera was composed before he was twenty. And these exquisite strains came to him constantly; his brain was full of "Una Voces" and "Figaro Sus;" he carried a paper in his pocket, and in the streets, or theatres, or salons, jotted down as they came to him the marvellous melodies that still enchant the world. A prince of some enchanted story indeed he seems; he lets you into a world full of strange delights; a sort of eastern tale he tells; dreamy pleasure he excites—as real, as exquisite, as subtle pleasures as the grander strains or more passionate throbs of later rivals.

## THE MARRIED BELLES.

“What says the married woman?”

*Antony and Cleopatra.*

A CELEBRATED beauty once accused me of preferring her mother's society to her own; she declared I went to their receptions and talked incessantly with mamma; she was sure of my penchant for married women; and we had a quarrel, which resulted, of course, unfortunately for me. However, the beauty is married now, so I suppose I may be re-admitted to favor. Yet I am not entirely sure that the jealous spinster was wrong. I used, a long while ago, to avow an open preference for the mammas; but that was when I was very young, and the girls don't like boys, while women *un peu passée* are amazingly flattered by the attentions of very young men. It puts them on a sort of equality; it takes off from their apparent age. I remember distinctly that I thought I made myself manly by avoiding those shallow, simpering maidens (who wouldn't speak to me because I wasn't twenty five); I looked down, or tried to, on all but matured women; my society was not such flirting, romping creatures as were (like myself,) not out of their teens, but splendid, finely-formed, elegantly-mannered married belles.

I outgrew that state (it wasn't even a chrysalis pe-

riod of existence, it was the caterpillar time of life), and passed into the mood when only my equals in age, or those slightly younger, delighted my fancy; it was still with an idea of seeming old that I put on a *blasé* air, and wanted something fresh. I had seen so much, for sooth, that one of the young things "just frae her mammy" was a relief to me, the man of the world; I looked down graciously on the innocent artlessness and coquettish simplicity of the juveniles, and, like Rochester, in "Jane Eyre," or De Sainville, in "Nathalie," was fascinated by the inexperience and *naïveté* so different from my own knowledge of the world and my natural profundity and penetration. Since those days I have had some experience, in reality: I won't pretend to say how much, but enough to make me modest; to show me that the women, married and unmarried, all know what they are about perfectly well; that they are born to command; that they are coquettes at sixteen, and able to combat even then with a finished expert; that I in particular am a fool, and they in general are wise as serpents and not harmless as doves.

I think I do appreciate married belles, however, at least as well as their younger rivals. I certainly have much to warrant me in such appreciation. From the days of Helen of Troy the married women have borne the palm. Didn't Paris prefer Venus to Minerva? Wasn't Eve married when the devil came after her? Didn't Mary of Scotland eclipse Elizabeth the virgin? Don't the married belles rule society? Can't they go where they please, receive whom they please, like whom they please, make whom they please, and mar whom they please? Are not the maids, young and old, trying



all, as hard as they can, to be married? Isn't it the aim and object of the young belles and blues and wall-flowers to reach the very position they so affect to despise? That French gallant was certainly at fault, who knew not after marriage where to spend his evenings. I could have told him. With some married belle, to be sure, who would find a flirtation with him infinitely more piquant, and his attentions infinitely more acceptable because they were claimed by another. Then his wife would not be lonely; all the beaux would crowd around her in her turn; he need not have hesitated on her account to spend his evenings elsewhere. They manage these things better in France, is an old saying; but this Frenchman lacked the national quickness, surely.

The married belles! oh, yes! I confess myself an admirer. I know many mothers whom I prefer to their daughters; mothers whose charms of person and manner are not at all on the wane; whose smile is no less radiant, whose complexion is no less dazzling, whose eye is to the full as speaking, whose movements are as graceful, and whose fascinations of behavior are as constant as any of Mademoiselle. I can think of half a dozen famous belles, whose names are known all over the country, and whose perihelion is not passed because the rubicon of marriage has been crossed; belles whose age is fabulous; the outset of whose career is lost in the mists of antiquity; who were belles in your grandmother's day; women about whom the last generation used to talk, and the next generation is crowding now to pick up their fans and fasten their bracelets. Those wonderful Washington belles! what has time to do with them? To be sure they paint and they patch, they

powder and they puff, and their toilette is said to be the work of a day; a work of art, indeed it is; their younger rivals tell all sorts of stories about their dressing-rooms, and bribe their maids, and shrug their shoulders, and speak of the eighteenth century; but there they are; the revolutions of parties, the flight of years, the changes of coteries affect them not; each successive season sees them fêted and followed; they set the fashion; they have the most distinguished men in the country at their feet, and at their levées; they leave whole crowds of younger belles behind them in the race.

But these women are exceptions, scarcely to be taken into account. There are others not as old as Niwon de l'Enclos, but as fascinating; women who boast of having been queens for a quarter of a century; who have been sought after at half the courts of Europe, who are known in every city in the land, and when they are in New York receive a hundred visits a day, yet retain a freshness of feeling, a youthful enthusiasm that some girls lose in their first season; whose hearts are not rendered callous by adulation; whose amiability is not lost by contact with the world. I was paying a visit last week to one of these, and there came in, the oldest and one of the first literary men in America. He had not met the lady in a quarter of a century, but he persisted in calling her by her Christian name; he told her she was as young in heart as she was still in appearance; he, with one foot in the grave, a man nearly eighty, repeated his visits six times in as many days, and renewed each time his expressions of delight at the naturalness and heartiness of the married belle.

Whether it is that the married women know what a

wonderful fascination youth possesses, and as this fades endeavor by graces of manner to atone for the unavoidable deficiency, or whether experience alone brings the charm that is so delightful, I don't pretend to say, but the charm exists. Some of these belles are not women of talent; some are inordinately vain, and some are exceedingly shallow; some whose sway is universally acknowledged, stumble at times in their English, to say nothing at all of French; some have a reputation for cleverness that they don't at all deserve, but which nobody takes the trouble to contradict; some are wearisome in exacting adulation, and others make the most exorbitant demands on the time and the labors of their admirers; send you on fearfully long errands, and require fearfully expensive compliments; ask outright for them, too. But for all, there is an attractiveness that I confess I often find irresistible while it lasts.

Then there are the young married belles. These have the advantage; they have the freedom, the ease, the position which marriage confers; they can go out with the beaux; they can receive as much homage as you choose to pay; they have all the prerogatives of one condition, and lose none that belong to the other. Their beauty has not faded, but seems often to receive an enhancement; their manner is more bewitching, their accomplishments are more engaging, their society is more piquant. After the first year of married life is over, and the honeymoon, if there was any, is past; when Madame begins to weary of one slave, and to long for that universal sceptre which she knows is her right; when the lover subsides into the husband, and the beauty sees no sign in her glass that she is subsiding into the wife,

then awful beauty puts on all its charms; then she comes forth in state, a queen—Juno, not Venus; and the men must beware. She knows how they may be won, how they may be conquered; she has learned to teaze and to trifle, to invite and to repel, to charm like the serpent in spite of resistance, to subdue, to trample, and to sting; she can be imperious or indulgent, implacable or pliant, enticing, complaining, mocking, earnest, fickle, what she will. There is yet no sense of waning powers to sour her temper or sharpen her features; there is no anxiety for success to render her too empressée; there is no absorbing passion to swallow up all her thoughts, and feelings, and fancies, and render her unconscious of everybody in the world but one: she is not in love; or if she is, she don't deserve to be, and is not a belle; she is only flirting, or playing, or coquetting, or not even these: she is enjoying her triumphs—

*"Cui in manu sit quem esse dementem velit,  
Quem sapere, quem sanari, quem in morbum injici,  
Quem contra amari, quem accersiri."*

## BOSTON.

"I'll view the manners of the town,  
Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,  
And then return, and sleep within mine inn."

*Comedy of Errors.*

Boston was not entirely new to me a fortnight ago, when I applied to myself the language of Dromio's master, and set out to deliver my letters—not exclusively to "traders." I had "gazed upon the buildings" before. I had seen the Common and the State House; had visited Fanenil Hall, and Mount Auburn, and was not liable to be lost, even in the defiles around Court street, or the labyrinth of lanes leading out from Tremont Row. But I had not "viewed the manners of the town;" I had not seen the people at home; I had not mixed in those circles reputed so blue and so frigid, so learned and so formal, that southerners proclaim pedantic, and foreigners call the most delightful in America. So all was strange and interesting to one with the propensities of a Vagabond—curious, ever anxious to see and hear some new thing, ready to go whithersoever any one would take him, to know whomsoever he should chance to meet, to experience whatsoever should be presented to his eager apprehension.

A New Yorker may be either the best calculated person in the world to enjoy and appreciate Boston, or the

worst. Coming from the hurly-hurly of the metropolis, from the whirl and confusion of its streets and its opera, from the splendor of its Fifth avenue dinners and the intensity of its Wall street life, from the excitement of its politics and the glare of its hotels, the crowding and jostling of its entire life, he may find Boston tame and insipid by comparison. He may hanker after the brilliant shops, the excited population, the hurry of business, and the rush after pleasure that he has left behind. He may call the Bostonians stiff and precise; he may find a lack of life, or fancy that he detects a narrowness of feeling, a provinciality of tone in their society; he may long for the cosmopolitan influences of New York. And, indeed, there is all the difference between the two cities that there is between a capital and a smaller town. The attrition produced by contact with so many minds of such various degrees of talent and culture; the humanizing effect of a world where none lead, where no one circle is absolutely first, where neither politicians, nor men of letters, nor artists, nor merchants, nor religious people give the tone, but where all are fused into one grand whole; the influence of so many influences, the result of so many combinations, the enlarging of the mind, the sharpening of the faculties, the quickening of the wits; the readiness for emergencies, whether of actual life or of social repartee; the confusion which yet, like the colors in a kaleidoscope, becomes harmonious—in a word, the great life of the world, all this distinguishes New York; gives it its attraction, its fascination for natures fitted for life and actualities; and indeed draws within its influences and assimilates in character and taste even those of different temperament,

who are placed at all near the maelstrom. If the outermost eddy reaches them, they are sure to be caught ere long in the maddest circle of the whirlpool. Besides this, the outward splendor, the gaiety, the prancing, dancing life, with the loud accompaniments of inspiring music intoxicates; and one procession comes so quickly after another, one draught is put to the lips so soon after the first is drained, that you have no time to clear your eyes or your head; you live in an entrainment. Some, it is true, weary of the whirl, but 'tis only those who are not used to it; the confusion soon ceases to stun, and only excites; and those who at first were anxious to get out of the uproar, soon find its exhilaration necessary to their existence.

It is not wonderful that such find a comparatively small and quiet place like Boston uninteresting. And, indeed, to one who should go thither and see nothing of its people, I imagine the city would soon prove insipid. The shops, and shows and streets, are dull after the pageantry of Broadway and of Stewart's, and the throngs who go to see Piccolomini. But to one who obtains access to the delightful society to be found in Boston, who finds his way among the people of high culture, of refined taste and real talent, who are the leaders and controllers there, I can imagine nothing tame. The peculiarity of the intellectual people there is, not, perhaps, that they are more intellectual than the literary men and women here, but that they have more influence. Mind and education are better appreciated; here it is talent and tact, and, above all, success that sways. Not wealth, as so many say and think, but success in almost any department of life, is the passport

to our society, the touchstone to all men's admiration in New York. In Boston, intellect has the same influence; here, a man may have an immensity of genius, and if he does nothing with it, if there is no result attained, to prove its possession, it does him little service. Here, too, there are perhaps as many cultivated people as in Boston, but they are lost in the crowd; they do not lead; they are only one component part of the great whole. In Boston they govern; their influence is seen and felt in society, in the newspapers, in State street, in the theatre, in the churches, at Mount Auburn, everywhere. Boston is essentially an intellectual place. Not having the same themes of actual life and business to engage their attention, or at least not so many of them, the Bostonians turn their minds more to abstract topics; they discuss such more fully and more often; they live more with books and with the past, than we men of the world and of the present.

How few houses in New York could one enter, as I did one in Boston, and find the entire conversation for a long and delightful evening confined to subjects connected with literature and art; persons, except as regards their genius or their talent, scarcely mentioned; events not so much discussed as causes; generalities, not individual cases considered; and a general tone given to the party that marked at once the highest culture and the most refined taste. And yet as many women as men were present; young and pretty women, too; well dressed and who wore fine diamonds and appreciated the charms of the toilette; but I saw none of the vanities and flirtings that make up an evening in New York. People absolutely forgot themselves, and



talked for the sake of exchanging ideas. Of course, ideas were then struck out fast and brilliant; wit, and geniality, and anecdote enlivened the oftentimes profound and original veins of thought; poets said nonsensical things, and men with famous names were not anxious always to maintain their reputation.

And this not at one house alone; at a dozen houses I met the same sort of people, and heard the same sort of talk. I doubt if you would at a dozen houses in New York. All this does undoubtedly give a greater air of refinement to Boston society than is often seen in New York; the people are not so brilliant in manner, are not so ready, so more than ready, nor are they so empressé; the eagerness, the hurry, the splendor so often verging upon ostentation, the brilliancy that so often is false, the parade that is, alas! sometimes vulgar, in New York, these the Bostonians have not; but quiet elegance, or, if not superlative elegance, yet perfect and well-bred ease. I saw no stiffness among those who, in the same station elsewhere, would be expected to be at ease; I found no frigidity to complain of; I confess I often said to myself: "This is almost better than New York." I was glad to breathe an atmosphere of culture; I was glad to be among people who thought before they talked, and not only at the same moment; I was glad to have an opportunity myself to think, to rest from the turmoil of the life New Yorkers lead. I was glad to find people who get time to read; who will discuss, and not think it pedantic, books absolutely a hundred years old; who talk of historical topics not actually suggested by some occurrence of to-day; who are interested in themes not altogether present. I confess I felt ashamed in this society to remember how lit-

tle time one finds here for study and reflection ; how soon the taste for it subsides ; how soon you forget to reproach yourself for neglecting the inner culture ; how absolutely we live for the senses and the outside : we refine, it is true, but we are sensualists still.

The difference in this very respect is apparent in the theatre. We go to the opera, and in the delights addressed to eye and ear, in the pageantry of the stage and the intoxication of sweet sounds, or even in the excitement that great music produces, there is not often any intellectual pleasure. The Bostonians appreciate music, too, but do not therefore undervalue the theatre. The most cultivated and talented people there make it their duty to support the drama, as a means of elevating and sustaining their own culture and taste, and that of the community. They listen to a play as carefully as they would read a poem or study a picture. And they look upon players differently ; they regard an actor of ability as a man of talent or genius, and receive him into their houses ; he has shown that he has mind, and is therefore their equal ; he is an artist, and they reverence art and welcome its professors. Art is not with them solely an amusement ; and they strive to elevate it by acknowledging, so long as they are worthy of acknowledgment, those who practise it. I knew of a symposium at the house of one of the first women in Boston, whose name is as familiar here as there, where poets of European reputation, wits, and scholars, and critics and statesmen were invited solely to meet an actor ; a man of rare and exquisite genius, and so a most desirable acquaintance for such as these. That man has been in New York, but I never heard of a party being offered him, except by a Vagabond.

## THE PREACHERS.

"What, art thou devout? Wast thou at prayer?"

*Troilus and Cressida.*

WITH no class of men is the professional uniform more significant of a sameness in character than with those who wear the gown. The fact that some denominations prefer black coat and white cravat to flowing robes and graceful scarfs, by no means excludes the plainer preacher from the criticism; on the contrary, the strictness with which the etiquette of dress is observed by the clergy generally, is quite emblematic of the ordinary evenness of their minds and almost universal tediousness of their sermons. Here and there, it is true, in a procession of priests or soldiers, you may see one conspicuous above his fellows, whose form the garb sanctioned by custom shall set off to unusual advantage, and the folds of canonical drapery or the strait-laced military suit serve only to display his natural grace or manliness; but ordinarily, it is the surplices and epaulets that attract attention, not the individual men. So in glancing over the crowd of preachers in New York, one is surprised to find the same traits belonging to so many, the same remarks applicable to nearly all. The list of those pre-eminent for talent or attainment is soon exhausted. They sing the same tunes in nearly all the

churches, though set to different words. However, one man shall play "Old Hundred" so that you fancy you never heard it before, and another read the Litany in a manner that makes you discover new beauties in a composition familiar to you from your cradle.

I weary soon of listening to platitudes; I have but slight respect for insipid sermons; I will not go to hear him who preaches in the finest of churches and to the most fashionable of congregations, if his voice is disagreeable, or his style slipshod, or his matter commonplace. And we have all been preached to so long, we have heard the same things said so often, that it requires a man of more than ordinary ability to interest his hearers. The most devout attendants fall at times to counting the panes of glass, or criticising their neighbors' dress. What then is to be expected of vagabonds? But there are men who never allow you to go to sleep, who never fail to enlist the attention of the most careless, who are sure to interest the most indifferent. Of this class is Dr. Hawks.

His taste has attained that degree of perfection, than which there is none higher, which prefers simplicity to ornate rhetoric; and though he has at his command the most elaborate and splendid eloquence, he is chary of its display, so that when the finest touches are introduced, it is always with the greater effect from their infrequency. Many a man with his gifts would be constantly obtruding them upon us, till weariness and disgust would greet the oft-recurring simile and never-ending declamation; but the wiser scholar makes us always wish for more. His rhetoric is only the cap-stone of his oratory, a crowning grace superadded to more solid ad-

vantages. Unlike most orators, he begins with logic; carefully-considered, well-digested thoughts are wrought up in perspicuous English, symmetrically and lucidly arranged. His studies are apparent from their general effect, from the chastened tone pervading all his efforts, and the ripened character of his productions, rather than from any parade of allusion or quotation. Neither the crowded imagery of Jeremy Taylor nor the sounding declamation of the great French preachers characterizes the most accomplished pulpit orator of New York; but rather a Ciceronian elegance and force. Everything is excellent, but no effort is visible; the finish is everywhere apparent, but it is the care that the sculptor bestows in rounding the form and giving the last touch to Hebe or Apollo, not the adorning of the tailor, though he dresses his block in coronation robes.

What, however, more than the absence of florid embellishment, probably surprises those who hear Dr. Hawks for the first time, is the comparatively unimpassioned nature of his discourses, and the careful reasoning that marks them. He certainly is not celebrated for his argumentative powers, yet these really distinguish him as much as any showier qualities, and are full as carefully cultivated. The admirable arrangement and beautiful progression of his ideas, are also remarkable; each thought is in its proper place and assigned its due importance. The rules of the masters in logic and rhetoric are scrupulously observed; the orator first convinces, then pleases, and then, perhaps, persuades.

But his rhetoric, though sparingly used, is not forgotten. When the proper moment arrives, it is introduced in the most felicitous manner, and with the most felici-

tous result. The perorations, especially, of his sermons are remarkable for splendid effects of oratory. In fact, throughout you feel that you are listening to a master of his art. The care that has been bestowed upon his efforts is the more manifest, the more you examine them or the closer attention you pay. But this very perfection inevitably suggests an idea of the labor and study that must have conspired to attain such perfection. The very grace of elocution reminds one of Bossuet, who was said to visit the theatre nightly in order to model himself in the best schools of delivery.

Dr. Hawks impresses you as an elegant and eloquent man, whom robes become, who reads the liturgy with exquisite grace and meaning, who is imbued with the learning of his profession, and knows how to use it well. But he does not impress you as a man deeply in earnest to convert his fellows. His thoughts and energies seem directed to the elaboration of his subject as a literary theme, towards accomplishing perfection in diction and gesture, rather than to urging upon his hearers the awful importance to them of what he preaches. So his reading, though in accordance with every suggestion of the most cultivated taste, lacks the unction that plainer men can infuse into the language of the Prayer Book, and his preaching has everything but soul. He is a Paul without his inspiration; a Chrysostom without his sacred fervor. Whoever desires an intellectual entertainment of the highest order, can be gratified by one of Dr. Hawks's highly-finished discourses; whoever seeks a soul-stirring utterance of vital truths, an energetic preaching such as sends you home uneasy and thoughtful, must seek for it elsewhere.

He fights with earthly weapons, well tempered and polished ; but that one sharper than a two-edged sword is reserved for other hands. He ministers in the outer courts in sumptuous robes, but never enters barefoot the holy of holies : his services are the rich man's offering at the treasury, which a widow's mite shall outweigh.

An orator, a preacher more diametrically opposite to him than Dr. Tyng it is impossible to imagine. Earnest, energetic, impassioned ; full of his subject, forgetful of himself ; anxious to persuade rather than to convince his hearers ; careless of style and manner, except as they may conduce to his great end—still, his absolute sincerity, the feeling with which he utters his convictions makes him always interesting. His own warmth affects his audience. Though he does not possess the sympathetic quality, the magnetic influence of voice and eye that some great orators wield, he lacks no other essential of eloquence. An extended command of language, correct, nervous, terse ; an abundant stock of images, apt and forcible though not remarkable for elegance ; a style not brilliant nor studied, but direct and telling ; a manner simple but animated ; these distinguish Dr. Tyng. His appearance is in his favor. In the pulpit he looks like a Knox or a Luther, preaching doctrines, perhaps distasteful, but which he does not for that, attempt to sweeten or disguise : his figure is tall, his attitudes fine, and his lively gesticulation is seen to excellent advantage in his own pulpit, which is so constructed that the speaker's whole person is frequently conspicuous. As he walks rapidly from one side of the platform to the other, and throws up his arms or brings them down forcibly and repeatedly, as if hammering an argu-

ment, the folds of his drapery cling to his form, and follow the varying outlines of his person, always clothing him with dignity, if not with grace.

He cares not to tickle the ear with sweet sounds and rounded periods, though he seldom offends it by abrupt readings or inharmonious language. He is not anxious to gratify a fastidious taste with pretty conceits and fanciful similes, yet a correct one can seldom object or fail to be pleased. He does not search for novel ideas nor indulge in elegant meditations, but brings argument upon argument, simile after simile, word after word, one upon the other, and drives the nail right home. You cannot go to sleep under his preaching. His voice is harsh and grating at times, but well-managed; his inflections being invariably admirable. Those who are close observers are aware of the vast importance of this last; a careless or ignorant speaker inflicts more pain on a cultivated ear by his neglect or violation of the rules of inflection than by any other means. It is a delight to hear Dr. Tyng on this one account.

He is doctrinal; that is, he preaches what he believes, he explains and applies it; but he is not really argumentative. He does not reason from causes, but from effects. He is not profoundly learned, and is remarkable rather for vigor than for originality or depth of thought, and would not, perhaps, affect a scholar so quickly as a man of the world. His reasoning is clinching: he rather overcomes an argument than removes it. He cannot dispel doubt, nor enlighten a dark mind. He does not answer the inquiries of a thoughtful and speculative man; but, at the time, he overwhelms all opposition. He pours out such a torrent of words, and



so amplifies or repeats an idea that you think it must have force.

He preaches the old orthodox matter in the old orthodox way. If you have new-fangled ideas, he knows nothing of such. He cannot handle a new disease or a delicate patient; if the right hand offends him, he is for cutting it off; if the right eye offends him, he would pluck it out. He deals in no metaphysical niceties, no refinements of sentiment or expression. He has no charity for anything or anybody. Believe and be saved, refuse and be damned; *aut Cæsar aut nullus*; no rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. Ye cannot serve two masters. As a matter of course, he is a Calvinist: he would have been a Puritan had he lived in the time of the Commonwealth; fought and prayed like Balfour of Burley; a true Saul of Tarsus breathing out threatenings and slaughter, or a Paul preaching with the same ardor with which he had persecuted; a martyr, if it were necessary, to die at the stake, or if he were an inquisitor, would burn the heretics with right good will. He is of such stuff as those are made of who govern the world.

## PICCOLOMINI.

"Her pretty action did outsell her gift,  
And yet enrich'd it too."

*Cymbeline.*

PICCOLOMINI fascinated me directly ; so those who want a calm and dispassionate criticism must look to some other Vagabond. I shan't pretend to write one. I know, indeed, that the new prima donna has not as much voice as Jenny Lind, nor as much execution as La Grange ; I have been sorry for her when she was singing the "Brindisi," in "La Traviata," and sorry for myself when she came to the "Gran Dio ;" but nevertheless I like her. I liked her before she had sung at all. Didn't you ? I paid her a visit, on the Sunday after her arrival, in company with a fine lady, who persisted in sending up her card, though the servant declared Piccolomini was at breakfast or at church ; but the card would be sufficient in most houses here, or elsewhere, to secure its owner admission, and it brought the Princess Piccolomini down stairs forthwith. She looked charming and eager ; my friend spoke to her in Italian ; and these were the first words spoken to the stranger in her native tongue by an American ; this was the first visit she had received, and she accepted the omen for good. Her face lighted up, as few faces can, at the familiar sounds, and

the two handsome women kissed each other with hearty good will. I was prejudiced immediately: (tantalized too. The wicked king in Hades had the good things very near his lips, you know, but couldn't reach 'em.)

Piccolomini was as frank and as natural as you would suppose; she told how anxious she was; how she had often and always longed to see America; how, now she was arrived, her fears were great lest she might not succeed. I saw her again, on the day before her *débüt*; it was at rehearsal; when I entered the auditorium, she was singing in the second act of "*La Traviata*;" crying and sobbing away in tune and time: she wore a walking dress, and her pretty little hands, "pretty because little"—as Moth says in "*Love's Labor Lost*,"—were cased in dark gloves; her attire was not at all calculated to make her or any one else forget Piccolomini in *Violetta*; but her form was full of action, and her voice full of feeling; she wrung those little kidded hands in bitter anguish, and cried as earnestly as if she were indeed losing one lover, instead of gaining a thousand; two or three chorus singers (women) sat behind me in the parquet, and fell a crying too: then they poked fun at each other for being so foolish, and at a rehearsal! but I thought to myself what a triumph was this, to force the very chorus singers to wipe their eyes. So I went on the stage after the scene, and complimented the singer. She was more nervous than ever; asked eagerly about the people out-doors; whether the house would be full; if the feeling towards her was kindly; thanked me earnestly for my good wishes; and as I left, held out that same little hand, and cried, "*Merci cette visite!*" And what do you think I did to the hand?

And how pretty she looked the next night ; how she gazed around at the great house, that never looked finer than on the night of her débüt ; how she seemed half-frightened and half-encouraged at her reception. She courtesied so gracefully, she smiled so bewitchingly, and then began to sing. Well, there is no doubt that people were somewhat disappointed at her voice ; they expected more of it ; greater compass, greater volume, greater flexibility, greater power ; for indeed Piccolomini is not a *great* singer ; but she is a woman of genius ; she has not a great voice, but she has a sympathetic one ; she has the power of expressing feeling in musical notes ; she cannot turn you out tunes with the facility of Madame Gassier, whose voice is as completely under her control as if it were a hand organ, and as soulless, too ; but she can infuse a meaning into her notes that one cannot be deaf to ; that goes straight to the heart. This power has very nearly been forgotten by the public. Since the "Traviata," Piccolomini has sung almost exclusively in comic operas, and her faculty of sympathetic singing has scarcely been called into play ; but she possesses it in a large degree. Her singing in the second act of the "Traviata" is an operatic triumph, is full of feeling and exquisitely effective. Indeed, because she acts so much better than she sings, her musical abilities are underrated here. Admit that her voice is not powerful, that it lacks volume, and what other requisite is absent ? She sings true, her voice is pure, is eminently sweet, and fresh ; her method is correct, her phrasing perfect ; her appreciation of the composer's idea always admirable, and always indicated. If sometimes the deficiency of her vocal powers prevents an

entire rendering of this idea musically, does not her dramatic talent take up the idea and completely develop it?

Of course, no one denies her dramatic talent; but, because she is so irresistibly bewitching in comedy, the public again fails to do entire justice to her action in serious operas. She herself prefers such; she likes the rôle of Violetta better than that of Zerlina; she prefers weeping to smiling; she likes to fling her beautiful arms and toss her beautiful hands in all the "loveliness of tragic sorrow," (as Mr. Fry calls it,) better than fascinating us by the coqueties of Serpina or the naughty naturalness of the Vivandière. She is very anxious to sing in an opera of Donizetti's, the libretto of which is founded on Chateaubriand's novel of "Les Martyres," and the plot of course is tragic. She clapped her hands and looked as delighted as a child when she told me that she would soon appear in this opera. First she described it to me; told me how delightfully tragic it is, how moving the music, how fine the rôle of the martyr. "And will you sing it?" "Yes!" with a beaming eye and a childish glee. "This season?" "Yes!" more delighted than ever; and I vowed, if she should, I'd go every night to applaud.

By the way, have you noticed her applaud when she is not on the stage? She claps away for Gazzaniga so vigorously that I'm half afraid she'll fall from her chair. She throws bouquets, she waves her handkerchief, and is entirely forgetful of herself. She laughs and cries just like an ordinary auditor. I went into her box on the night of "Robert le Diable;" she told me she was one of the public now. I asked her how she liked being one:

Very well, but she'd rather be on the stage. "Oh, I assure you, there is nothing like the stage; ah, me! the applause! *Ce sont les plus belles choses du monde, les applaudissements!*" And she looked like a little Corinne as she spoke. I'm sure she deserves to be crowned at the capitol. For was there ever any more exquisite sentiment than that portrayed by her in the first act of the "Traviata;" anything more delicate or more natural than the first feeling of love indicated on her mobile face; anything more sadly, truly, beautifully done than the parting with her lover in the same opera? She is not a Violetta, however; no lorette was ever so refined in bearing; no Traviata ever so shrinkingly, modestly, delicately loved, as she.

But what archness, what supreme comic genius in the music lesson of "La Figlia del Reggimento." How she worries and mimics her old aunt; how wickedly she stands and picks out the feathers in the old lady's coiffure; how she lays her music on the back of the marchioness; how she pats her foot in lilliputian rage; how she tears and twists her sheet of paper with vexation; how she looks at the corporal impatiently and finally rushes to his arms to sing the rat-a-plan! Then her Zerlina! whether in the ball-room, smoothing her clothes and gazing in wonder at the dancers, or coquetting with the Don, or making up with Masetto, she is the very ideal of comedy; as irresistibly, as provokingly funny as it is possible to imagine, but so exquisitely refined with it all; twisting her face into all sorts of pretty grimaces; winking and blinking, frowning and pouting, coaxing and wheedling; but always as pretty, as the Bible says, "as apples of gold set in pictures of silver."

And that saucy, rattling, mad-cap, Serpina; and that model of waiting-maids, Susanna; surely these were never so portrayed before; no wonder Almaviva forgets his countess for such a servant; no wonder Hubert was fool enough to let his housekeeper have her own way. Oh! she must have been a princess. Whether the passport is right or not, I don't know; whether the Clementinis are related to the Piccolominis or not, I don't care, but this little Maria is a princess by nature. She has a passport that is quite as good here as in Sienna; and people understand it too, who never studied Italian, any more than she has English. *Apropos*: You should hear her speak English, or try to. That tiny little mouth gets all pursed up and puckered in her attempts to pronounce the words stuck so full of consonants, and she laughs merrily at her own mistakes. One morning she had been practising some difficult passage in the "Figlia del Reggimento," and ran up to the piano, to try it again. She repeated the strain several times till it was perfect, and then turned to me with the air of a conqueror, and exclaimed in very pronounced style, "All dright!" And so she is "all dright."

The public thinks so. Everybody thinks so. The young men are in love with her, of course; they say one of the most fashionable fellows in town has proposed to marry her; and I know an old foggy who hasn't missed a night at the opera since her débüt. He seems cold and careless enough; you would never suspect him of sensibility; but the princess or the prima donna, or the woman, has taken him captive; has found out the way to his heart, and grandpa wipes his glasses very often when she sings Violetta, and laughs till he

cries when she acts *Serpina*. He leaves his business to go to the *matinées*, and I don't doubt his slumbers are disturbed by dreams of the *Piccolomini*. Then the women are not jealous; even the big ones do not scruple to acknowledge her tiny charms; and the little ones are ready to worship her for proving how charming a little woman can be. Nobody supposes that she is the greatest singer in the world; nobody is humbugged, nobody is mistaken; but everybody is fascinated. They go to see the most bewitching little body now in America; to notice her wonderful manner, to laugh at her thousand tricks of behavior, to be delighted with her smile, with the twinkle of her eye, the grace of her movements, and the soul that is everywhere evident in her action. *Piccolomini* has succeeded as few *prima donnas* ever have done; and the reason is because she is full to the brim, overflowing with feeling; sprightly or sentimental, exquisitely comic or delightfully tragic, but always true, always natural. Like *Imogen*, indeed, her action does outsell her gift, which is her voice; but how enriches it besides!



## A NIGHT WITH THE BOOTHS.

*"Insignis ipse, digno patre natus."*

GREAT actors seem to be regarded with a peculiar and personal interest. The world wants to hear about their doings off the stage as well as on ; the "Memoirs of Rachel" is the most successful book of the season, and anecdotes of Roscius or pictures of Garrick are preserved as carefully as royal autographs or originals by Guido. The fleeting triumphs of the stage are thus perpetuated by tradition ; and the fame of the mimic sovereigns is sometimes as lasting as that of the real monarchs who lorded it so loftily. And, indeed, now that both are gone, wherein is George III. better off than Garrick ? The tinsel crown lasted its owner as long as that which blazed on the head of the Defender of the Faith ; the sceptre of each has passed into other hands.

I spent a night, not long ago, with young Booth at the old country place of his father, rummaging the theatrical wardrobe ; reading letters from Edmund Kean and the elder Mathews, from Elliston and Macready ; looking over playbills printed in 1810 ; picking out the history of a lifetime from fragments of dresses and leaves of books, and reading a remarkable character from manifestations made only to its intimates. It is

quite a history. The young actor and I started from Baltimore at noon, and drove about twenty-five miles before reaching the farm. We neither of us were particularly conversant with the management of horses under difficulties; and when the harness broke, as it did once or twice, Romeo and the Vagabond were in a quandary indeed. The tragedian often enough calls out "his kingdom for a horse," but I'm sure he'd much rather have had a groom just then; and when the carriage stuck in the mud, we could only imitate the classic countryfellow, and call on our gods, but with as little success as he. Finally I turned Phaeton and held the reins, while Roscius set to work and played farrier, being positively his first appearance in the part. We lost a shoe, and lamed a horse, and broke the tackle some half-a-dozen times, but at last got safely at the fine old homestead where young Booth was born. 'Tis a beautiful spot. None of your carefully laid out villas; no grottoes, or gardens or fountains; no gravelled walks or conservatories, but such a place as I prefer to anything of the more fashionable sort. A remote and lonely precinct: the house stands back a long way from the county road, and is approached through a wood; 'tis situated in an opening, and surrounded on all sides by a thick growth of trees; the whippoorwill and the raccoon are neighbors; some fields of meadow-land or corn hard by, relieve the landscape, and an acre or two immediately beside the house was evidently once a lawn; 'tis now uncared for, and overgrown with rank, high grass. The building that stood when the elder Booth bought the farm a quarter of a century ago, is given over to a squad of negroes who labor on the place,

while the dwelling-house, some six or seven years old, has constituted until recently the abode of his family. They now prefer a town residence, and when we reached the building, it had not been occupied, nor indeed opened, for many months.

We had the keys, however, and after giving our horses in charge of a venerable black who declared he had had "Massa Edwin himself in charge more than once," we entered the mansion. 'Twas nearly dark, and cobwebs reached across the door; most of the furniture had been removed; in fact all but a few book-cases and tables. We ransacked drawers and closets for old books, and letters, and journals, and pamphlets, and we found them. Books in every language; Latin and Greek, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, English, all thumbed and marked, and full of apposite quotations; the classics of each language with plays and dramas by all sorts of people in all sorts of tongues. Terence and Lope de Vega, Shakspeare and Tait, Ben Jonson and Racine lay side by side on the shelves with the production of some nameless vagabond, who had sent his effort in manuscript to old Booth for inspection. Plays whose names alone were familiar to me; some of which I had never heard or read; some that had been performed; some that had been damned; some marked for the stage, with the blank page interleaved, and full of directions; some with famous autographs on the fly-leaf; some with uncut leaves. Then there were novels, and poems and metaphysical works, and especially the masterpieces of Spanish literature. The Koran, too, we found, and pored over it, getting authority for all sorts of wickedness; and concluded 'twould be a much

pleasanter *vade mecum* for young men than the religious book of the Giaours.

Before long, darkness overtook us; but we were prepared for all emergencies, and had brought candles from a country shop on the road. What to stick them in was the question. Mambrino's basin did service better than when it was transformed into a helmet, and the experience of my comrade suggested other expedients for lighting the scene. One was that I should serve as a candlestick, after the fashion of the martyrs in Nero's time: he had seen something of the sort on the stage, I suppose. This, however, did not take my fancy as it did his, and we compromised by sticking the candle in an old shoe. Then we sat on the floor together, in a closet, and revelled over our treasures. First one would cry out at a fresh discovery; then the other exclaimed as he struck a vein or came upon a placer.

Letters and journals, as well as books, were open to the scrutiny. Engagements offered to Junius Booth nearly half a century ago; particulars of his quarrel with Edmund Kean; invitations to the box of the elder Mathews; witty notes from Elliston were tumbled by turns out of old trunks and corners, where they had lain till they were mouldy. The piles of play-bills had a wonderful fascination for me. The first appearance of Edmund Kean and Junius Brutus Booth in the same piece was announced; the débüt of Booth in America; the first night of the "Apostate," in which the son now plays the part the father once declined. It was strange to look at these bills that were first handled fifty years ago, and three thousand miles away; that told of the pleasures of people long since in their graves. Manager,

and actor, and audience, all have passed away, and here were we two young men wondering and gossiping over all that remained of what was once so interesting. These little bits of paper called up the scene very vividly. I could imagine the crowded house, and the green curtain, and the applauding audience, as they must have appeared long before I was born; and as I looked up at the face of my companion, all aglow with interest, it was no difficult task to summon the handsome, expressive countenance his own is said to be so like, and to fancy the person and powers of the great actor whose genius as well as whose manly beauty he inherits. The plays were many of them the very same in which young Booth excels. I saw the bills printed when the father was at the exact age of his son to-day: Sir Giles Overreach, Richard III., Sir Edward Mortimer were in as much demand in England in '19, as they are in America in '59. So I thought of the long career of triumphs the father had gone through, and wondered whether fate had in store for the youth at my side a corresponding history, as she had already showered on him corresponding gifts. There was a tinge of soberness in our mirth. The glee with which we gloated over these strange treasures could not but be tinged by thoughts of the utter oblivion into which much of what had once been so intensely present had for ever sunk; and as we saw the parts so familiar cast to names we never heard, though we talked not much of sentiment, I am sure we both felt it. Then, too, in the midst of these mementoes of the father, we came upon a pile of play-bills belonging to the son, and compared the casts; we thought of the time when some youngsters would be

looking over these very lists, and we should have long since mouldered. The candles were getting low, you see.

We were neither of us good at snuffing them; and more than once overturned stand and all in our ill-judged attempts, besides blacking our fingers. The time passed away very quickly, and when Hamlet took out his watch and made me guess the hour, I said ten o'clock, though it was past two. We had made no arrangements for sleeping; there was no bedding in the house; but we were having a night of it, and concluded the adventure bravely. Armed with candles, we roamed around the rooms, and finally put two sofas together, and discovered an old mattress. But the night was cool, and we must have some covering; so Roscius got into the old wardrobe of his father, pulled out an ermine cloak that belonged to Macbeth, and some of the trappings of Shylock or Lear, and tossed them to me. I made a pillow out of the very mantle of Cæsar through which the envious dagger ran, and slumbered quietly enough, though Macbeth had murdered sleep in the robe that kept me warm. We talked away long after our candles had burned out; previous to which I induced Hamlet to read me some funny stories, and when he got tired of reading, to tell me more; so I fell into a doze, with his voice ringing in my ears; and he may tell of having put one auditor to sleep by his monotonous delivery. I warrant you, some of his fair admirers would not have slept, so long as he talked, and doubtless they envy me my snooze on his arm. But 'twas dark, and I couldn't see his eyes; besides, I had seen them all day.

Next morning we rose late; the bed was so good, that not till eleven did I hear the tragedian rouse me with the first words that Sir Edward Mortimer speaks in the play. We went out to the pump to make our toilettes, and then opened a tin kettle containing sandwiches we had brought from the country tavern. The negroes gave us milk, but we had no confidence in their cleanliness, and washed a broken cup and an old plate that we found; for ourselves. This breakfast equipage was disposed on a garden table, and Hamlet did the honors very gracefully. The banquetting scene was not disturbed; no ghost entered with gory locks; but you should have seen Lear washing a tea-cup, and Romeo making the beds. However, he had a way of doing even these that was worth looking at; and moody, and morose and quiet as he often is, was full of wit and geniality with me. He quoted Shakspeare constantly and felicitously; he made faces for me out of all his plays; he looked like Richard when he says: "What do they in the north?" and struck the attitude of Richelieu when he launches the curse of Rome. In this vein, we went to the wardrobe, and had another hour of sport.

He got out old wigs—one that Kean had worn in Lear: the very one that was torn from his head in the mad scene, and yet the pit refused to smile; he found me his father's in Othello, and put it on to show the look. There was a picture of the elder Booth hard by on the wall, and the likeness was marvellous. He told me the history of this sword, and a story about that red cloak; he dressed me up in toggery, and then decorated himself for a farce, declaring he would have made a hit in Little Toddlekins, only it was too much trouble to be funny.

On our way to town we stopped at the cemetery, where the worthy son of a distinguished father has erected a beautiful and costly monument to the memory of the great actor whom he resembles. 'Tis an obelisk of polished Italian marble, on a pedestal of undressed granite, some twenty feet high, and the work of Carew, the eminent Boston sculptor. On one side are the dates of the birth and death of the tragedian, with his name in full; on another, simply the word Booth; on the third is a medallion head, full of character and beauty, remarkable both as a work of art and as the representation of a noble, soulful face—'tis extremely like the profile of the son. The third side also bears this inscription:

“His life was gentle; and the elements  
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up,  
And say to all the world—*This was a man.*”



## SOCIETY AND ART.

“O, had I but followed the arts!”

*Twelfth Night.*

SIR ANDREW AGUE CHEEK is not the only man who has regretfully exclaimed in his heart: “I would I had bestowed that time in the tongues that I have in fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting.” There are those whom you and I may see all around us, who say, though not aloud: “O, had I but followed the arts!” There are many, too, who are only made conscious of their own deficiencies when the attainments of others become conspicuous: who, being naturally destitute of any taste or feeling for the beautiful, do not discover the existence of the beautiful till they hear those around them discussing it; who have bestowed their time, if not in fencing and dancing, in making money—a very laudable occupation, doubtless, and one whose results are often productive of much advantage to the arts, but which, if too closely pursued, is apt to leave its follower in the condition of the knight in the play. When I hear these fools who have fine houses criticise the pictures that they can’t tell from daubs; when I hear those whose eyes are stone blind to the exquisite harmonies of color and the delicate graces of form, whose ears are deaf to the shading in music, and much more to the soul embodied in its expression, condemn Murillo and call Beethoven dull, I

often want to bid them study "Twelfth Night," and learn how the shallow gentleman fared even at the hands of a chambermaid.

It is the fashion for people who have large houses and walls inside them, to cover their walls with pictures; it is the fashion to have statuary in the halls, and statuettes on the mantels; but I know a dowager who bought a couple of busts and christened them after she got them home, and to this day she shows for heads of Corneille and Racine, what can easily be recognised as presentments of Dante and Tasso. I doubt if the good lady can tell whether Dante wrote Racine or Tasso painted Corneille. I have even been shown a picture of the Cenci, that was painted expressly for a young and ardent lover to present to his innamorata; she looked at the gift, and thought it very pretty. "But why do you call it, the Cenci? Why don't you call it Julia, after me?" Poor Julia lost her lover because she hadn't followed the arts. There are people that talk about music and don't know a false note when they hear it, much less a true one; they prate about Piccolomini's lack of execution, and comment glibly on the peculiarities of the tenors, and I am not sure but they think Formes is one of the last. However, because such creatures as these exist, because such ignoramuses live and move and have their being in a Christian land, is not to say that all are like them. This is to fall into the fashion ever to be deprecated, of confounding the goats with the sheep; of taking a vulgar herd for examples of the cultivated few.

I am weary of those who, familiar only with persons capable of *bêtises* like those I have described, imagine such to be the only types of New York society. Doubt-

less there are many such people; people with whom wealth is an all-sufficient passport; people whose time is spent in dressing and feasting; who live in grand houses, and wear diamonds and ermine; who fare sumptuously every day; who go through the routine of fashionable life; pay visits and receive them, give parties and go to them, frequent the watering-places and make the grand tour, and in the eyes of outsiders pass for individuals of social distinction, but who have no more access to the true society of this metropolis than if they lived in Kam-schatka; who are well enough aware themselves that their money can buy them no admission to circles where many poorer folk are petted and sought. I am weary of those who insist that they who make the most bruit are the standards of manners. Noisy, blatant, ignorant, assuming, uneasily conscious of their own deficiencies, they strive to cover, by ostentatious parade, those deficiencies in culture and refinement that never can be covered, and in the newspapers and novels, in the estimation of strangers who have never really seen New York, they are recognised for what Mr. Curtis calls "our best society." He, too, who knows so much better; who is intimate in circles where real culture reigns.

For there are people here, in this much-abused New York, who have been gently bred; who have seen the most distinguished companies abroad; whose culture and taste in literature and art are mature; whose manners are as elegant as their accomplishments; whose subjects of conversation, often light indeed, are always graceful; who take an interest in pictures; who read new poems and study and appreciate old ones; who are often the bearers of historic names and the inheritors of

splendid fortunes ; honors which they wear becomingly, conscious of the advantage and consideration to be derived therefrom ; but whom *noblesse oblige* ; who avoid vulgar wealth, but far from being snobbish, seek out and delight in the association of talent, no matter how humble ; whose position is so well established that they are not afraid of injuring it ; whose only object in exclusiveness is to keep themselves aloof from coarseness and ignorance. They are accomplished without being pedantic ; they have travelled and are not unpatriotic ; they are people of the world without being frivolous ; fond of gaiety and fashion, but of an elevated and refined sort ; they do very many of the same things that their imitators do, but, as Goneril says to herself :

“ O, the difference of man and man ! ”

Within these circles, moving on a perfect equality with the most fortunate, are many families not so wealthy ; many not so old ; neither birth nor fortune is an indispensable requisite, though these are acknowledged of course as good things, as desirable ; as likely to conduce to the culture and breeding of their possessors. New people, whose tastes and manners fit them, move here ; persons of talent without any other pretensions are gladly received. Do you call this a fancy sketch ? Do you, alas ! know no such circle ? Have you never seen the inside of such houses ? I am sorry for you ; but, because your experience is limited, don't be incredulous, my unfortunate friend. Like Richard,

— “ Live in hope.”

“ All men, I hope, live so.”

These are the people whose intercourse with artists is so mutually delightful; who recognize the claims of art to give its student a social status; who imitate, after a fashion, Alexander, when he picked up the pencil of Apelles: they acknowledge that mind fits its possessor for the company of the highest. Titian and Charles V. were intimate; Talma and Napoleon. And I couldn't but think last week, as I looked around on the various groups at the Artists' Reception, how the stamp that nature had impressed on some of the men there made them first; how fashion was really paying homage to art and picking up its pencil. The fact that fashion pays this homage speaks volumes for New York culture. In England an artist is not on a level with the first in the land; a man of letters is rarely so; you remember Clive Newcome and Frank Vance; intellectual eminence does not procure standing of another sort. Here it is the intellectually distinguished who are most sought after. And how worthily they bear their honors! how fitting it seems for them to receive honors! Their manners are very naturally suitable for a courtly atmosphere. How can they be anything but refined whose brains are full of such exquisite fancies? How can they be other than courteous and dignified who are embodying such courtesy and dignity in their art? I have known men devoted to art who had scarcely ever been inside of a drawing-room, who were afraid of a brilliant and fashionable woman; who never had any contact with the great or the gay world; I have known some such intimately, and they were as exquisitely refined in every idea and sentiment, as free from any taint of vulgarity, as lofty in their sense of honor, as innately delicate in feeling, as the most studied

gentleman whose breeding is the result of years of polish, and whose bearing is inherited like his family plate.

For that matter, I have also known men come of old and distinguished races, whose estates have been held by people of their name for centuries, whose family had been gentle longer still, and yet they were so intrinsically and essentially coarse, vulgar, boorish, that, neither blood nor culture could eradicate the taint. These instances were indeed rare on both sides; the latter fortunately the rarer. As for me, I don't want to know any one because his grandfather was a gentleman, unless he is one too, though I own he is likely to continue in the line of descent; and I do want to know men naturally and by instinct gentle, whether they have what we call good blood in them or not. Their blood is good. I was reproved once, and righteously, by a man of as good blood as any in the country. It was after this wise. We were talking of some distinguished woman of exquisite manners, whose origin I supposed to have been obscure, and inquired, "Was she a lady by birth?" "She was a lady by nature," said he. And he was right.

But I am getting away from my theme; only I have long wanted an opportunity to say this much about New York society; to maintain that though there are many people who are quite as bad as the bitterest satirists say, there are also others of a different sort; who may be no better in reality; I don't suppose that culture or refinement changes people's characters; men of education may be just as wicked as ignorant ones; the finest gentleman may hate you as heartily as a blackguard, though he will not tell you so in the same language. He will

kill you in a duel, but not use foul words. I don't contend that those who constitute the really elegant society of New York are better Christians, or better men and women than others; but I think it hard they should be charged with the sins of the others.

In the new and delightful novel of "Ernest Carroll," a work written with elegance and often with eloquence, and evidently the production of a scholar, the character of an American is portrayed, who is imbued with the tastes and feelings and sentiments, who acknowledges the restraints and performs the duties and fills the ideal of a gentleman; a gentleman who is an artist, an artist who is a gentleman. The author of that work deserves the thanks of American artists and American gentlemen for proving that the characters can be combined, that they have so many points in unison; for telling the world that his countrymen are not all Ague Cheeks; that some among them have "followed the arts."

## LONGFELLOW.

"Sweet and commendable."

*Hamlet.*

I DON'T find any American author of verse at all comparable with Longfellow; nor, indeed, more than one poet who writes the English tongue, no, nor the French, whose works I prefer to read. Tennyson may be a man of more original genius, of profounder thought, of loftier suggestiveness and deeper feeling; but he speaks to a smaller circle than his cis-Atlantic rival. Could you canvass the reading world to-day, you would find ten admirers of Longfellow for one of the Englishman: this, too, among people of average culture and taste; among lovers of poetry. Now, the fact that a writer speaks to the general heart, is sure evidence of his power. As for Béranger and Victor Hugo, the only recent French poets who are much known out of France, perhaps the most truly poetical, the fullest of genuine, simple pathos, and unstrained sentiment of any French writers, early or late, Longfellow surely will not suffer by juxtaposition with these. The very attributes for which they will hereafter be admired, which secure them now so wide a circle of appreciative readers, are those which most distinguish him.

He does not, it is true, take rank with the greatest



poets; not even with writers of the power of Byron or the earnestness of Burns; he cannot be compared with the creative geniuses; nor is he even so original as Wordsworth, the Prê-Raphaelite, or so exquisitely rich in fancy as the subtle Shelley. The poetic phrensy does not seem ever to have inspired him; there is no trace of a lofty imagination in his works; no trumpet words that stir one to the inmost soul; no superb kindling vision; no power of utterance that embodies the evanescent glories of the poet's brain: but there are other phases of power that still deserve the name of poetry. There is an imagination which is delicate and graceful, if not gorgeous or inspired, and which sees the ordinary objects of nature invested with hues and forms of gentle loveliness; there is an ability to set distinct and vivid pictures before other minds, of objects and characters, even though those characters and objects be not grand or brilliant. There is a faculty of speaking soft, low words that touch the heart, that bring tears to the eyes, that summon up pure sentiment and genuine feeling. This is akin to poetry: this is poetry.

Mr. Longfellow possesses these powers—the last in an especial degree. And this is a gift utterly unattainable; he who has not true pathos may strive after it for ever, but his efforts will be unavailing: it comes not at the bidding of any man; it must be innate. And who that has read “Evangeline,” and many of Mr. Longfellow’s shorter poems, but will acknowledge that the power pertains to him as remarkably as to almost any living writer? He does not, it is true, stir up profounder passion, but he touches the fountain of tears; he lays hold of some of the holiest feelings of our nature; the

charms of domestic life, the memories of the dead that lie garnered in every heart, the budding promise in a young and thoughtless child, the happy confidence of the bride, the gentle loves of youths and maidens in all the purple glow of early life, of these he tells, and how sweetly! These he recalls to those who fancy that the era of such emotions is past for them; these he paints for such as have not felt them, with a true, earnest, but touching simplicity. There is nothing maudlin about his sentiment, nothing overdone in his pathos: he is pure, genuine, just in his taste—a taste so pure that it must be instinctive, and not acquired. His sentiment is not the lamentation of Sterne over a dead ass, nor the womanish weakness of Mrs. Hemans, nor the lachrymose sentimentality of Lamartine, but an honest, tender, gentle pathos, which cannot fail to affect any unperverted heart. Lines like those on “The Old Clock on the Stairs,” like the “Voices of the Night,” and the few but skilful touches in “Hiawatha,” with which he describes the grief of the Indian over Minnehaha’s death, are genuine poetry.

Another marked characteristic of Longfellow is his picturesqueness; this is, of course, in great part, owing to the distinctness of his mental vision: he has a painter’s eye; he does not perceive so much the suggestiveness of an object or a scene; nature does not call up to him the pregnant thoughts that she sends or summons to the brains of some who write; but he looks kindly on her; he discovers her apparent beauties, if not her recondite ones—all the charms of her person, if not those of her soul. He may not penetrate, perchance, to the hidden significance which some men find in every-

thing; neither has he that peculiar intensity which makes nature alive with responsiveness to its own emotions, which kindles the sky and the sea and the shore into another passion answering to its own; he sees not the hell of waters that Byron saw, nor the passionate storm that fell on Lear; but the calm glades where Alden and Priscilla walked; the bayous of Mississippi, the wildness of Hiawatha's woods, and the sterner quiet of Acadie—these he notes in all their freshness and their naturalness. These he describes as vividly as Goldsmith, to whom, in many things, he bears a close resemblance. The soothing influence of his poetry, and the still life of his pictures also remind me of Durand: a poem by Longfellow, is like one of those landscapes you must have seen—representing a warm delicious day in June, with cattle browsing near a sluggish stream, overhanging willows that tempt you to stroll beneath their shade, fields tinted with the richest verdure, and all steeped in the bright but not glaring sunshine in which Durand delights—a picture such as, hung up in your room, would make you gladder and better all day for gazing at it. Longfellow's cheerfulness, his tender reminiscences of the past, his trust in the future, make you think better of men, and feel kindlier towards them. They lay the troubled spirits, they dispel your haunting doubts, and for a while, at least, exorcise all the demons.

Then his soft music lulls whatever might interfere with this delightful but not enervating calm; so flowing, sweet and melodious, it is also good proof of poetic ability; for the gods send not their gifts singly. The power he has over words, the exquisite ear which detects every jarring syllable; the taste which selects at once the most

melodious and the most fitting incarnation for his thought; these are talents that are denied to most writers. This power over language, different entirely from mere fluency, is peculiarly evidenced by the various forms into which he moulds his lines. "Hiawatha" and "Evangeline" demonstrate his skill in versification, whether the use of the forms is to be considered successful or not. And whatever the rhetoricians may say about the inapplicability of these forms to the English tongue, the world has decided, and Longfellow has triumphed; he has wedded his gentle fancies, his touching pathos, to some of the most graceful and melodious verses written in our day. He has varied his style and yet preserved an individuality; like him who plays such different tunes on a chime of bells, but yet plays them always so that you shall know the instrument to be the same. His music is no *Æolian* harp swept by unknown winds and wafting to us weird airs; he summons up no *Christabel*, no *Ancient Mariner*; he pictures the gentle *Evangeline* and her sorrows; he sets the quaint courtship of *John Alden* vividly before the eye. He does not sound the profounder depths of our being, nor lift us out of ourselves in an exaltation, but he finds poetry in our homes and on our hearthstones; he sings the songs of the cradle, and of the bride tremulous with excitement on the threshold of a new life; he laments tenderly and touchingly the vanished ones whose place shall no more be filled; he paints every-day nature and every-day life, but invests them with graces and charms that all may find, that all acknowledge when once his touch reveals them.

The music may, perhaps, sometimes cloy; if any fault

is to be found with his sweetness, it is too constant, not sufficiently relieved by passages of wilder or more unequal measure. And as a man's genius is always mirrored in his style, the same objection can be brought against his works. There is not only an individuality, but almost a monotony in Longfellow; there is no mistaking him; he rings the changes till you not only recognize the instrument, but the player too; whether in the trochaics or the hexameters, whether translating so exquisitely from the German, or Swedish, or Spanish, whether describing the wars of Mudjekeewis, or the woes of the French peasantry in Acadia, or the wooing of Puritans in Massachusetts Bay, he is always himself; he looks on everything with the same kindly vision, in the same genial spirit. His characters are not dramatic; you see the poet in them all, not them all in the poet; he is neither many-sided nor versatile; he cannot disport, he cannot be sublime: but why should we quarrel with a man for being himself? If he were otherwise, the gentle equability which at times delights and soothes, would be lacking. You cannot have impetuosity and finish; ardor and calm. The placid lake of Geneva is no less enchanting because Niagara roars and tumbles on another continent; and the pleasing melancholy of still evening would be gone if the crash of the thunder or the rent of the lightning disturbed its sober charm. There are hours and times that come to all men when the delicate pictures and soothing influence of Longfellow and Goldsmith, are more acceptable than the turbulence of Byron or the splendid fervor of Dryden. And there are many who, never reaching to those loftier heights whither more exalted genius soars, would rather dwell

with humble livers in content, than perked up in a glistering sorrow. To such men, and to all men at times, Longfellow will always be as welcome as most of the poets whose works the world will not willingly let die.

**THE END.**

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